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COMPITUM;

Vol. 7.

OR,

THE MEETING OF THE WAYS

AT THE

Catholic Church.

THE SEVENTH BOOK.

LONDON:

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MDCCCLIV.

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tude, contempt for riches and glory, 195; discourse of the holy, 197; casual visits, 199. Avenue by the general results of these institutions—centres of peace, 201; right of sanctuary, 204; a refuge from despotism, 205; contribute to the peace of the world, fruits of a pacific, peace-producing, and therefore true religion, 209.

CHAPTER III.—p. 211.

THE ROAD OF RETREAT (*pursued*).

Avenue by moral and intellectual fruits. These institutions form great men, 211; learned men, 219. Union of classical and Christian erudition, 226. Characteristics of the monastic learning and philosophy, 228; its views of society full of condescensions and indulgence for the rest of men, sanctioning popular amusements, 238; the theatre, 241; the monastic services in regard to popular instruction, 245; opposed to superstition, 249; the influence of the religious as general instructors, their sermons and conversations, 253; their example, 256; their charity, indulgent to sinners, 257; their simplicity, 269; frankness, 270; toleration, 272; their loyalty and justice, 274; not useless, but serviceable and industrious men, 277; they console the miserable, 278; encourage and assist the poor, 279; their hospitality, 286; the monastic tales as heard when enjoying it, 295.

CHAPTER IV.—p. 299.

THE ROAD OF RETREAT (*terminated*).

Their services of a material order. The monks as agriculturists and workmen, 299; their herds, 302; their scientific observations of all natural phenomena, 303; as horticulturists—their gardens, 305; their care and administration of forests, 307; conclusion that these were useful institutions, and indicative of the truth of the religion which gave rise to them, 311. Avenue by a consideration of the character which belongs to the friends of these institutions, 315; their privileges, 322; by the character of their enemies, 325; the destruction of the monasteries, by pagans, Mahometans, and modern revolutionists of all classes, 337; the contempt evinced by their destroyers for the ancient provisions to secure perpetuity to such houses, 342. Signal by the view which Catholicism recommends respecting the past, present, and future, 349; it recognizes the existence of abuses, 350; the need of reform, 351; the necessity of change, 352. Such calm wisdom indicative of its truth, 358.

CHAPTER V.—p. 359.

THE ROAD OF OLD AGE.

Change of appearance in the forest at approach of evening, 360. Old trees symbolical of age in men, 361. Avenue by considering how Catholicism delivers old age partly from its vices, 365; the vices of the old, 366; how these are counteracted—avarice, 370; cunning worldliness, vanity, 371. Character of old age under the central influence, 371; active, 372; kind, 376. Catholicism removes the moral and alleviates the physical miseries incident to old age, 377; the miseries of the old, 377; lament the passing away of youth, 380; central principles furnish a remedy, 382. Moral discipline preserves health, 382; even beauty, 386; they deliver from moral miseries, from regrets as to the past and youth, 388; render old persons like young, 391; conduce to the happiness and respect of the old, 398; cause old age to be employed for the benefit

of youth, 399; secure care and tenderness for the old, 403; contrast where these principles fail, 405. Catholicism secures for age a sweet and glorious decline, 408.

CHAPTER VI.—p. 409.

THE ROAD OF OLD AGE (*terminated*).

Avenue by the affinity between old age and Catholicism. Age, by its repose, reflection, and memory, conducive to a recognition of truth, 409; favourable to natural devotion, 413; to wisdom, conferring a prudence which cannot be caught by snares, 415; conducive to the true philosophy of life, 421. It loves equality and esteems the low, 422. It is inclined to great tolerance, 425; to wise retractions of raw and violent opinions, 426; favourable to charity, kindness, and moderation, 428; corrects foreign predilections, 431; makes indulgent by memory, 434; by the tenderness arising from recollections, 437; directs by a sense of life's brevity, 438; conducive to a desire of heaven, by weaning from the world, 439; disenchanted by means of the subtle evils of life destroying its poetry by false views of religion, glad to escape from the sphere of the immoderate, 440; weaned from life by its inability to reside in places congenial to it, 442; weaned by the changes around it, 443; by domestic afflictions, 444; by the absence of love, 445; inclined to the thought and hope of another world, and therefore favourable to impressions of Catholicity, 442.

CHAPTER VII.—p. 450.

THE ROAD OF THE TOMBS.

Attempt to invest the subject with cheerfulness by showing how the young and happy visit cemeteries, 451; associated with lovers' walks, 452. Analogy between trees and men in regard to death, 458. First opening to the centre by the fears and repugnance which only faith dispels, 465. The natural views of death gloomy, 466. Catholicism delivers from this melancholy view of death, by a supernatural doctrine, 470; practical faith in a future life, 471; fears respecting it diminished by central principles, by the doctrine of the atonement, 473; of purgatory, 477. Examples of happy death by means of central principles, 479; which change the view of death by a moral discipline, 483; how far they inculcate a remembrance of it, 484; preparation for it, 486. Contrast between those who reject and those who embrace this discipline, 487; the bad die ill, 488; those who have lived Catholically find death happy, 491. Examples of happy death, 492. Catholicism sweetens the approach of death by its partial restoration of nature to its original harmony, 496. Evils from the sphere of the unnatural greater than those incident by nature, 497. Catholicism restores the natural sense of immortality, 499; the sense of death being medicinal, 501; easy, 503; happy under all circumstances, 511. It makes use of natural forces against the fear of death, the sentiment of honour, of love, 512.

CHAPTER VIII.—p. 524.

THE ROAD OF THE TOMBS (*terminated*).

Catholicism yields comforters and observers in sickness and death—after death mourners of the best kind, 533; prayers for the dead, 537; decorous burial, 546; an inviolable grave, the cemetery, care of sepulture an attribute of man, the cemetery visited, 550. Catholicism agrees with the ancient sentiments of humanity respecting burial, regards it as charity to procure ground

551; bodies of the poor respected, 552; sanctions the choice of a grave, the common feelings of nature outraged by antagonistic principles, 555. Ancestral tombs, 557; beauty of the place significant, 558; Catholicism causes it to be frequented, and prevents the dead from being forgotten, 559. All Souls, 562; walk through the cemetery, 565; burial in cities and churches forbidden, 566; visitors to the tombs, 569; Catholicism secures their erection as a duty of friendship, 572. Catholic instruction from the tombs, 573; epitaphs, Catholicism inspires the best, 579. Issue in general to the centre from the cemetery as a religious place which Catholicizes the mind, 573. Last openings furnished by thoughts on the return after visiting the tombs, 592.

ERRATA.

Page 29, *for* all that vain, &c. *read* of that vain.

„ 426, *for* age does show, *read* age does not show.

Comptum.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.



THE ROAD OF RETREAT.



AMONG the roads of the forest of life, some to a European traveller are fraught, perhaps, with early recollections of having visited those shores "which have yielded us our religion, our arts, our literature, and our laws:" regions the most enchanting that the earth can boast of for their natural loveliness, and from which we have gained such things, that, as a celebrated English author says, "if they were erased from the memory of man, we should be barbarians now." The rugged track that mounts the steep before us at this turning will prove one of these attractive passes. Already we seem invited to pursue it by a certain cheerful southern light, towards which it seems directed; many poplars wave their heads here over a stream, which flows murmuring from some caves above—the chirping grasshoppers raise their voices amidst the sunny banks; the wood-pigeon coos; the yellow bees fly on all sides from flower to flower. Every thing, as the Sicilian songster says, is redolent of summer: *πάντ' ὥσθ' ἐν θέρει μάλα πύονος**. Further on we shall enter the region of firs and pines, where rock-embosomed lawns and snow-fed streams are seen athwart froze vapours deep below; while, still further, the road winds upwards through over-shadowing woods.

After advancing however only a few steps, perhaps some persons, who were merely attracted by the title of the road, and who are only anxious to breathe for a while the air of retreat beneath these solemn boughs, are seen to stop suddenly, as if startled at their own thoughts, and afraid to proceed further. Guided by a kind of instinct, and by the impressions resulting

from the scenery, they say, without intending to complain of any unfairness, but for the mere sake of truth, that it is to the monastery this alley must assuredly lead them. Well, in effect, without more words, it is plain they are right; for its name is only thus indefinite in order to express the common wants of those who enter on it, whom in general we suppose to wander through the forest without having at first any distinct idea respecting the end to which each road will lead them. Nevertheless, let them take courage, and walk on; for, unless they have been already in some especial manner drawn to admire the peculiar state of life of which we are about to witness the results, no one will seek to detain them. There is no design to make them contract a predilection for the immediate objects that will be seen; for our business is not to eulogize the monastery or recommend monastic life, which is a subject about which we should not presume to speak further than any wandering observer may have liberty; but merely to point out what directions can be gleaned from observing such institutions, in regard to the central truth, in the discovery of which we are all equally concerned. Our task is only to read in passing, as it were, the sign-posts which have been set up on the road of retreat to guide further than the monastery those who visit it either actually in person, or only mentally, in solitary study; viewing it on every side—in history, in relation to the present wants of society, or with regard to what the unknown future may require for the interests of mankind.

In their choice of a locality the trees sometimes can recal the men who seek retreat from the world, and from whose habitations the present road might, but for the reason just suggested, have derived its name. The cedar, the larch, the fir, and all the resinous family of the forest, love the sublime scenery of mountains; the chesnut, the ilex, and the cornel-tree can accommodate themselves to both mountains and valleys, the former tree, however, flourishing best when it is only half-way up the hills. At Engelberg you ask, How could even men, who sought to withdraw and hide themselves, select a spot so cold and barren? But the analogy of vegetable nature in the forest would prepare you for such a phenomenon; for some trees can only thrive in wild and desert places, such as this Alpine valley. The broad-leaved trees, corresponding to men of the same retiring family, prefer, on the other hand, a smiling scene, such as that described in the Virgilian lines :—

“Gramineum in campum, quem collibus undique curvis
Cingebant silvæ, mediæque in vallo theatri
Circus erat *.”

The wild service-tree of fowlers might represent the hermit, who is found in sequestered spots that seem unfitted for supporting life—as in the deepest hollows, on the most precipitous rocks, and in the clefts of old trees—for it can grow any where; and it has another analogy, too, with those who lead an eremitical life, being an especial favourite with many animals, and of great use to men from its medicinal properties. Pines are so associated in the mind of European travellers with the memory of monastic retreats, that they can seldom enter a wood composed of that kind of tree without thinking of them. As a mantle of pines is often seen to shelter woods themselves from the sea-winds, which would injure them, and which, in fact, have sometimes by degrees caused entire forests to perish, so these dark enclosures seem provided to screen the peaceful asylums of a retired religious life from the invasions and scrutiny of the world. Pines naturally belong to the elevated regions in which monasteries are often found; for when heath has taken full possession of a ground, it hinders the growth of all other trees. It is then only the pine which can master it, and cause it to disappear.

So, then, the road of retreat, winding through woods and mountains, leads men at first, by a natural and easy track, to those celebrated religious houses which have occupied more or less the attention of the world since the earliest ages of Christianity. We shall have to pass by the monastery, and interrogate its inhabitants as to what we shall find as we proceed beyond them. The stranger, for his part, must confess, that however disqualified his inclinations may render him for halting long at such a stage, he, for one, does not regret now having to stop for a short time at it; for, besides that this visit is unavoidable in order to fulfil the primary object of the present journey, which is to seek the natural centre for those thoughts that impel some men towards retreat, it seems to him that the monastery itself, more full of visions than a high romance, adds in general to the forest a great charm, an historical value, and even, in many places, a certain poetic interest, which few persons of any education can wholly resist. The building, too, attracts the eyes of all who pass. It is not a tower of strength, though with its height it overtops the woods; but for delight and piety some holy hands constructed it in days of yore. When you first behold those massive walls and picturesque turrets tipped with evening gold, you think of many things besides religious men upon their knees, and hands pressed in mute devotion on the thankful breast. All Christian history and philosophy, the whole literature of the middle ages, seem represented there. How many dim traditions of those grey old times rise in the traveller's memory. How pleased is he in Spain, when on his road between Torre-

quemada and Duenas he sees on his left the great Benedictine monastery of San-Isidro; or when, after passing Burguelle, he comes to the plains surrounded by lofty mountains, Plaga des Andres Zaro, and to the village of Roncevaux, with the famous convent of St. Augustin, under the title of our Lady of Roncevaux, endowed to serve as a hospice for travellers by Don Sancho the Strong, who there lies buried.

Few men are so harshly treated by nature as not to feel a certain pleasure in beholding the vast and noble buildings of the monks, in exploring the treasures of art and erudition contained in them, and in surveying the solemn memorials of departed greatness which they so often enclose. "Beauty," says a great writer, "is the mark God sets upon virtue." Every thing natural is graceful. Without exaggeration, one may add, that every creation of man, produced by means of principles which centre in Catholicism, is also beautiful, and "causes the place and the bystanders to shine." It is observers from without its influence who remark, with the author of "Venetia," that among the charms of those golden plains of Italy must be ranked "the hallowed form of the cupola'd convent crowning the gentle elevation of some vine-clad hill, and flanked by the cypress or the pine."

Such edifices as St. Scholastica, Monte Cassino, the Grande Chartreuse, Engelberg, Hauterive, St. Urban, Einsiedeln, and Montserrat, enhance the beauty of the world. What must it have been before the destruction of others, the mere ruins of which attract so many strangers to the wilderness! "I am sure," says an English writer, "that not the faintest idea is generally prevalent of the contrast in appearance between England before and since the dissolution. Try to imagine the effect of thirty or forty Chatsworths in a great county, the proprietors of which were never absent. There were on an average in every shire at least twenty such structures*." It was the same on the continent. The Basilica of the monastery of Cluny in Roman architecture surpassed in its dimensions all churches then existing. The architect was the monk Hezelon. It comprised one vast church opening into another. In size it would have been only surpassed by the present church of St. Peter at the Vatican†. The monks were great preservers of ancient monuments, which have been often destroyed by the more elegant and pretentious men who succeeded them, as in the recent instance at Aix, in Provence, where the venerable oratory of St. Saviour, to which the city owes its existence—as it was only in consequence of the monks returning to it after the ravages of the Saracens in the eighth century that the city was rebuilt, and which even the French Revolution respected—has

* Disraeli's *Sibyl*.

† Lorain, *Hist. de l'Abbaye de Cluny*.

been demolished, for the reason that it obstructed the view of one of the lower aisles of the church, an inscription actually attesting this incredible act in the words, "ob offendiculum asymetriadque diruto *."

In general, travellers of all classes are favourably impressed on beholding the edifices raised and preserved by religious men. "Within these vast walls," says one eminent observer, gazing on the Escorial, "pierced with 1140 windows, of which three-fourths are now broken, the Court and the Hieronymites used to collect formerly, the world and contempt for the world." Another wanderer, speaking of the admirable beauty of the courts and cloisters in Santo Domingo at Antequerula, says, "How wonderfully is all this disposed for reverie, meditation, and study! what a pity that convents have been inhabited by any men but poets."

In general, monasteries were so constructed that they could be distinguished at the first glance from other kinds of building, feudal or commercial. What was this style of architecture? It combined utility with beauty. No doubt the monk imprinted on his very dwelling an ascetic physiognomy; but it is no less certain that he did not build it, as some at present would prescribe, like a melancholy prison, where no more light is known but what may make you believe there is a day; where no hope dwells, nor comfort but in tears; a darksome habitation, like some cavern which the sun never durst look into, made in contempt of light by nature, which the moon did never yet befriend with any melancholy beam. He seems, on the contrary, in most cases, to have borne in mind while constructing it the definition of man by Strabo, who calls him "a land and air animal who requires much light." One of the complaints of Charles V.'s Flemish attendants against the monastic buildings of St. Yuste, which they were determined to dislike, was that the windows were too large for the size of the rooms. The monastic churches at least were not dark. There is a window at Tintern Abbey which measures ninety feet in height, and twenty in breadth. Vasari, it is true, being invited to paint the refectory of a very ancient monastery at Naples, built by King Alfonso I., found that its arches and low ceilings almost deprived it of light, inasmuch that he was for declining the work till the monks permitted him to make certain modifications in the architecture, which rendered the room less gloomy. But in general, at least as soon as the invention of glass and the progress of art permitted, neither cheerful galleries, nor spacious windows, nor lofty and noble apartments, were excluded from the type of monastic architecture. "Our monasteries," say the monks of Camaldoli, whose little book of constitutions seems quite perfumed with the wild flowers of the desert, "should be so constructed as to have their pros-

* Mon. sur l'Apost. de S. M. Mag. en Provence, 508.

pect to the south and east, and never to the north; the woods around them should be dense and wide, and there should be water in abundance; for three things are necessary to hermits, without which their hermitages cannot endure; and these are, sun, wood, and water. It is always of great avail when the site is redolent of devotion, and when it is among faithful and devout people*."

The abbey of the canons regular of Fiesole, built for Cosmo de Medici by Filippo Brunelleschi, is praised by Vasari for the reason that "the building is cheerful, commodious, and truly magnificent." Dom Germain, after describing the marble cloisters of the Carthusians at Naples, says that "the beauty of the whole place inspires the Neapolitans with a wish to become monks;" and speaking of Mount Cassino, and its dormitories one over the other, but no sound reaching between them in consequence of all the rooms being vaulted, he says that "the congregation of Mount Cassino can boast of giving rules for building wisely, solidly, and agreeably†." Vasari also speaks in raptures of the convent of the Fratiguesuati at Florence. He describes in minute detail its noble church, its commodious arcade, with a fountain in the centre, communicating by a spacious avenue with a larger and still more beautiful cloister, opening through the principal path into the garden, forming a view more delightful than words could easily describe; the interior of the whole convent being filled with paintings by Pietro Perugino and Domenico Ghirlandajo. If any who affect antiquities more than is requisite, and who love

"The gloom
The sun-excluding window gives the room,"

be disposed to accuse such architects of choosing a Pagan taste, they ought to be reminded that their own favourite sentence about a dim religious light applies much more to what was inherent in the heathen mysteries, that dark religion within dark groves, or small temples with only one aperture, than to any thing really associated with truth, which teaches man to wed himself to light from infancy, and with that pure religion which ever invokes light, as if in the poet's words, addressed to its great symbol,—

"All hail, pure lamp! bright, sacred, and excelling;
Sorrow and care, darkness and dread repelling;
Thou world's great taper, wicked man's just terror,
Mother of truth, true beauty's only mirror,
God's eldest daughter; O, how thou art full
Of grace and goodness! O, how beautiful‡!"

Who is it that shall tax the architects of such monasteries with Paganism, seeing that besides their reasons for such taste, they

* Constitut. Er. Camald. pars ii. c. 11.

† Correspondence de Mab. &c. i. 169.

‡ Sylvester.

were as sensible as any men could be of what really constituted the blindness of the heathen? Michel Agnolo, says Vasari, "delighted in the reading of Scripture, like a good Christian as he was, and greatly honoured the writings of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, whom he had heard in the pulpit." He did not the less make his buildings cheerful, and suitable for men who might be heard saying with their last breath, "Open the shutters, and let in more light:" let us behold the sky.

The monasteries were often built upon the plan of the Carita at Venice, in which Palladio planned a building representing a private residence of one of the rich and hospitable ancients. "One ought," says Goëthe, "to pass whole years in the contemplation of such a work." No doubt, circumstances of time and place may have stamped a very different character upon some monasteries. When anxiously expecting to arrive at the hospitable fireside of the hospice of St. Bernard, and at length a solemn massive pile is faintly discerned rising out of the misty cloud that envelops the mountain, we are not surprised at its rough-hewn, graceless form, since the style of the edifice was determined by the locality, which admitted of no exterior decoration; but certainly, had we found a similar edifice on the Wye or the Loire, no one would ever have taken it for the habitation of monks. The truth is, they were not "men of one idea" even in architecture. They accommodated their buildings to the times they lived in. They did not bear a grudge to all art, to all beauty, to all wisdom, that did not spring from their own minds. They never fondly imagined that there was but one fine thing in the world, namely, Gothic architecture. That was a fine thing, but there are other things besides; and when a different taste arose, they did not see any good in scouting, proscribing, and loathing all that other men delighted in. Neither Einsiedeln, nor St. Urban's, nor Hauterive, nor Corby, were in the Gothic style, and yet no edifices could surpass them in solemn and beautiful effect. In the eighteenth century the monastic dwelling in general was a building as joyous as it was vast and beautiful. Calci on the mountains of Pisa seems to rival a palace of the Arabian Nights. The refectory in the abbey of St. Germain was 115 feet long, 32 wide, and 47 high, and on eight immense windows were emblazoned the arms of Castille.

The buildings of monks are found, not alone amidst the woods and mountains, and the enclosures especially appropriated to them in cities, of which so many might have borne the name of Plasencia, from being noted, like that of the Vera in Spain, for their pleasantness to saints and men, but also in the common thoroughfares and streets, where their hostels or town-houses formerly stood. We have only to open the work of Stowe to witness instances. "There," he says, "in Southwark, be the abbot of Battailc, his house. The abbot of Hlyde, his house.

The prior of Lewes, his house. The abbot of St. Augustine, his house. On the east side of St. Peter's-lane standeth a large house, of ancient building, sometime belonging to the abbot of St. Mary in York, and was his abiding house when he came to London. In Castle-lane also is one great messuage, of old time belonging to the priory of Okeborne in Wiltshire, and was the prior's lodging when he repaired to London, this priory being of the French order. Within the inn of the Tabard was also the lodging of the abbot of Hyde (by the city of Winchester), a fair house for him and his train, when he came to that city to parliament. There was also a great house of stone and timber, belonging to the abbot of St. Augustine without the walls of Canterbury, which was an ancient piece of work, and seemeth to be one of the first built houses on that side the river over-against the city; it was called the abbot's inn of St. Augustine in Southwarke." "In Bosse-lane," he says again, "is the great house that once belonged to the abbots of Chertsey in Surrey, and was their inn when they repaired to the city." But, to return to the monastery itself. In many religious houses were apartments set apart for the king, or for the founder, or for some great and devout personage, who enjoyed the privilege of a room in which he could make an occasional retreat. Thus, in a document in the archives of Monte Cassino, the Emperor St. Henry says, "All our predecessors, Charles, Pepin, Charles, Louis, Lothaire, Lewis, Otho, and others, had their especial camera in this abbey*." At Pontigny it was, at the entrance of the abbey, that Thibaud, count of Champagne, built a palace for himself, in order that he might frequently assist at the office of the monks†. Gardens, parks, and beautiful cloistered walks were generally added. The garden of the Franciscans at Oxford was called the Paradise.

But if the buildings and adjacent grounds alone prove thus attractive, what shall we say of the treasures of art and erudition so often contained within them? Some reformers, it is true, required that monasteries should offer nothing to the sight but what was poor, cheap and common‡; but it would seem as if they only made an exaggerated use of truths which were not the less acted upon when the interests of art and learning were not neglected. "It appears to me," says Vasari, about to write the life of the painter Dom Lorenzo, monk of the Angels of Florence, "that permission to pursue some honourable occupation must needs prove a great solace to a good and upright man who has taken monastic vows. Music, letters, painting, or any other liberal or even mechanical art, must, in my opinion, be a valuable resource to him; for after

* Dom Gattula, Hist. Abb. Cassinensis, 370.

† Chaillon des Barres, l'Abbaye de Pontigny.

‡ Vita B. Laus. c. 11. ap. Mabill. Acta SS. Ord. S. Ben. t. ix. 36.

having performed all his religious duties, the monk so gifted passes his time creditably, as well as happily, in quiet contemplation, secure from the molestation of those ambitious desires by which the idle and unoccupied are constantly beset, to their frequent shame and sorrow." At all events, even in the oldest monasteries, we find proof of encouragement being given to the arts of painting and sculpture, and that too from the highest authority, as when Pope Paschal I. placed the portraits of many saints in the dormitories of the convent of St. Agnes*.

At Fontanelle, Luxeuil, and St. Germain de Flaix, the dormitories were filled with noble pictures, as were also the refectories, and the whole of the churches†. The statement that in the dormitories of Monte Cassino, in ancient times, "*nihil fuit pictum aut variatum*," leaves us to conclude that the rest of the monastery contained pictures. In 1266, we read of Hermann, the son of Frederick, count of Kirchberg, giving to the monastery of Reinhardsborn "the picture in which the history of St. Benedict is so ingeniously represented‡." In the abbey of Porta, one saw the picture of the founder, Count Bruno, of the ancient dynasty of Plisna and Smolna, under which was written,

"Sic est Brunonis facies ; sic pictus in armis
Stat Bruno in templo, Porta benigna, tuo §."

In the Benedictine monastery of Bosan, at Ciza, were many curious antique pictures||, though the interest was excited less by the artistic effect than by the inscriptions accompanying them, and by the ingenuity of the form of instruction. Over one cell was inscribed, "*Quinque sunt opera cellæ præcipua. I. Jussis intendere. II. Utiliter legere. III. Meditationi insistere. IV. Frequenter orare. V. Decenter quiescere.*" On another, a painter represented a ladder to heaven, with precepts of salvation for steps, and a monk praying at the foot of it. Near it was another ladder leading downwards. From the tomb of a monk, a tree with seven branches rose up, over which was written, "*Opera eorum sequuntur illos¶.*" The branches were inscribed, "*Obedientia, castitas, patientia, humilitas, paupertas, caritas, pax.*" On another cell, the enemy of man was represented, invested with symbols of his qualities, which were designated as pride, luxury, avarice, sloth, anger, envy, calumny; and under him was written, "*Eccc draco magnus**!*" In the Capuchin's cloister at Sursee may be seen painted the whole

* Mab. Ann. Ord. S. Ben. t. ii. 443.

† Vita S. Anseg. ap. D'Achery, Spicileg. ii.

‡ Thuringia Sacra, 117.

|| Thuringia Sacra. ¶ Apoc. xiv.

§ Chronic. Portensis.

** Thuringia Sacra.

life of St. Francis; in the picture which represents his dream, the black armour with yellow crosses on it produces a spectral effect, suspended as it is round the chamber, in which he is seen sleeping, under one of those tall canopies which give such a solemn aspect to beds of the antique fashion. The library of the monastery of St. George, in Venice, was covered, as Dom Germain said, with paintings almost in miniature. Over every class there were figures of the principal authors belonging to it. The pictures in the refectory of Cluny represented the founders and benefactors of the monastery*. In general, portraits of eminent persons, historical scenes, and noble compositions, representing scriptural events or religious mysteries, were the works chiefly found in monasteries. The portraits are often highly curious, as being authentic. When Fra Giovanni da Fiesole was painting, in the convent of St. Mark, medallions of all the popes, cardinals, bishops, and saints who had been Dominicans, the brethren of his order assisted him by procuring likenesses of these various personages from different convents, by which means he was enabled to execute portraits that have now such an historical value. The convent of the Carmelites of Paris contained likenesses of many of the most illustrious women of the seventeenth century. There you saw those faces, the loveliness of which history has found it necessary to describe, in order to explain tragical events. The picture by Titian, representing Charles V. and the empress, clothed in linen garments, kneeling in prayer, with folded hands, before the majesty of Heaven, was painted by order of the emperor, who said he intended taking it with him to the monastery of St. Yuste, where he intended to retire, and it remained there till it was removed to the Escorial.

Art requires patronage, but still more sympathy. In convents, even of the professed poor, painters found the latter, and accordingly the mendicant orders had pictures that cities would be proud to possess. The Capuchin convent at Seville was full of paintings by Murillo. The poor friars, who had nothing to give for pictures, had a collection fit for an emperor. Murillo, who was fond of the Capuchins, used to go to them and spend a few days with them, in spiritual retreat, which often led to his giving them a picture. Artists were often induced and inspired to achieve noble works, through a certain pleasure in labouring for particular monasteries. The Carthusians, near Florence, wishing to have some pictures in the angles of a large and beautiful cloister surrounding a fine meadow, Jacopo da Pontormo was delighted to undertake them. "The manner of life here presented to him," says his biographer, "that tran-

quillity, that silence, all things, in a word, were so in accord with his character and genius, that he resolved to surpass all his former works on this occasion; and he was so charmed with the place, that he spent several years over these pictures. Besides these works, in order to please the monks he painted the portrait of a lay brother, who was then living there at the age of a hundred and twenty years."

To form an idea of the monastery, in this respect, and of the monks inspiring and encouraging the painter, one need only read the account which Vasari gives of himself. Thus, in the abbey of San Bernardo, in Arezzo, having painted some walls, he says, "Although, as an inexperienced youth, I did not effect what might have been done by a more practised artist, yet I did what I could; and these monks, having consideration for my early years, were not displeased with my labours." Invited by the fathers of Camaldoli to paint figures for the church of the hermitage here, he says, "The Alpine solitude and profound stillness of the place delighted me greatly; and, although I perceived that, at first, these venerable monks, seeing me so young, began to doubt of the matter, yet, taking courage, I discoursed to them in such a manner that they resolved to accept my services." Having completed these works, he descended to the abbey, and there executed other pictures, "to the great satisfaction," he says, "of the monks, as they gave me to understand; and during this time," he adds, "I discovered how much more favourable to study is a calm repose and agreeable solitude than the tumult of cities and courts. I perceived, likewise, that my error had been great when I had before placed my hopes in men, and made my pleasure of the follies of the world. Detained in the place by the charms of that solitude, I lingered there for some time after the completion of my pictures, having also taken sketches of rocks and mountains from the district around me."

Paintings in monasteries were generally executed for the precise spots in which they were placed; and this accounts for the fact, that they are found in the best light and most appropriate position. Vasari, having to paint for the refectory of the Black Friars of Santa Fiore e Lucilla, at Mantua, caused the canvas to be first fixed in its place, and afterwards painted, which method, he affirms, should always be adopted. Sometimes even the frames were the work of great artists. Thus it was Giuliano who prepared those of all the pictures in the refectory of the abbey of Santa Fiora, in Arezzo.

In monasteries of the most austere orders pictures are found in abundance. The archives of the Carmelites of the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, at Paris, contain an inventory of the paintings by celebrated masters, of the statues, and other works of art,

with which the piety of the faithful of all ranks, during two centuries, had enriched them*. In fact, generally, the monks ranked painters with theologians. "Whoever loves not pictures," they would say, with an old writer, "is injurious to truth and all the wisdom of poetry. Picture is the invention of heaven, the most ancient and most akin to nature. It is itself a silent work, and always of one and the same habit; yet it doth so enter and penetrate the inmost affection as sometimes it overcomes the power of speech and oratory. There are diverse graces in it." Great teachers have artists proved themselves. In the refectory of the monks of Monte Oliveto, at Naples, the painter represented eight virtues, intimating to those who eat in that room the qualities required for the perfection of their lives. The frescoes of Dominiquini, in the church of St. Louis of the French, at Rome, representing the whole life of St. Cecilia, are said to be more eloquent than any writing; and the same praise might with justice have been bestowed upon that picture by Lappoli, the disciple of Dom Bartolommeo, representing a crucifix, at the foot of which were two figures kneeling, one being a poor man, from whose breast proceeded a sort of radiation, issuing directly towards the wounds of the Saviour, on whom his eyes were earnestly fixed; the other being a rich man, clothed in purple, with rubicund face, from whose heart also proceeded rays while he appeared to adore Christ, but which, instead of going directly to the wounds of the Saviour, were scattered and dispersed over a broad landscape, exhibiting corn-fields, cattle, gardens, and the sea covered with barks laden with merchandise, and, in fine, tables whereat money-changers were seated. Another instance of the instruction conveyed by such works is presented on the walls of the chapter-house in the convent of San Marco, on which Giovanni da Fiesole painted the history of the Crucifixion, in which picture are figures of all those saints who have been founders and heads of religious orders, mourning and bewailing at the foot of the cross. But what a lesson is read again, for persons doubting, in that figure of St. Thomas laying his hand on the wound of Christ, by Verrochio, the incredulity and his great desire to assure himself of the truth of the fact being clearly perceived in his countenance, while, at the same time, the love with which he lays his hand most tenderly on the side of Christ is also manifest. The aged, worn figure of St. Girolamo, with eyes fixed on the cross, in the Carthusian monastery at Florence, by Perugino, is also another example of a monastic work executed, as Vasari says, "more after the manner of a deeply-thinking philosopher, than of a painter."

* Cousin, Madame de Longueville, p. i. c. i.

The prevailing taste, at present, among English Catholics, substituting for pictures in churches graceful drapery, variegated compartments, architectural conceits, or the stucco of house-decorators, holds out no great encouragement to those who love elevated art; but the monks, in general, were so devotedly fond of pictures, that to describe their pleasure on seeing any thing admirable, one might say of them what Tacitus writes of those who from the provinces came to Rome to see Saleius Bassus, the orator; for having once seen him, they would depart, he says, contented, "*ut si picturam aliquam vel statuum vidissent.*" The enemies of monks were not characterized by such enthusiasm for the arts; and even to the present day, in England, where such multitudes abhor every barbarism, whenever an old fresco painting is discovered on the walls of a church, antiquarians, it is said, have great difficulty in obtaining a respite of a few days to make a copy of it, in such haste are some of the ministers and churchwardens to have the place whitewashed over, as their predecessors left it.

The inscriptions found in monasteries, "mouldering scrolls writ in the tongue of heaven," might be set down, also, among things deserving of notice. Appropriate and solemn, the monks' lines can still produce an effect on those who mark them. Thus, over the place for washing hands, in the abbey of Monte Cassino, you read,—

"Mundities animæ corpus super astra decorat,
Ab lue cor lacrimis, ut aqua tibi proluo palmas.
Utraque membra liquor mundat uterque recens,
Ut foris oblectet nitor, hunc decet intus haberi.
Si tua mens sordet, quid erit si laveris ora.
Aut oculos puro corde lavato manus."

In the cloister of Montserrat, one reads these lines, composed by Father Seraphim Cavalli, general of the Dominicans, who, on his passage by Montserrat, thus expressed his veneration for the place,—

"Ave Maria Serrati Montis incolæ.
Decus Hesperiae, Barcinonis gloria,
Ostium pacis, porta sacrorum liminum
Per quam transeunt ad vitam Dei famuli *."

At the convent of St. Yuste might be read these lines, inscribed on the wall of an open gallery: "His majesty, the emperor, Don Charles the Fifth, our lord, was seated in this place when his malady seized him, on the 31st of August, at four o'clock in the afternoon; he died on the 21st of September, at half-past two in the morning, in the year of our Lord 1558."

* D. Montegut, Hist. de Montser.

But besides pictures and inscriptions, many things that belonged to the class of historical curiosities could generally be found in monasteries. The treasury was not a place to be passed by, if persons were interested in works of ancient art. At Châteaudun, in the abbey of the Magdalen, which had been re-established by Charlemagne, was kept a glass, nine inches high, and five in diameter, with compartments of enamel and gold, and an inscription round it in Arabic. It was called Charlemagne's glass, as having been one of the presents made to him by Haroun-al-Raschid. The riches in the treasury of Cluny were immense. Here were "gold vases embossed with long-forgotten story." In reading the description of the precious stones named in many monastic inventories, one might think that it was from a tale in the Arabian Nights. Here were inestimable jewels, diamonds of such a piercing lustre as struck blind the amazed lapidary, while he laboured to honour his own art in setting them. Here were statues, representing saints, in gold, and silver, and ivory, with crowns of diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds, and sapphires. Nor were archaeological riches confined to the interior. The exterior walls, the gardens and cloisters, contained often historical memorials, or curious works, of great antiquity. Descending from bald downs, in New Castille, when you come to St. Pedro de Cardeña, in a wooded dell, you observe the Cid, mounted on Babieca, carved over the portal. This was the first Benedictine abbey in Spain, raised by the Princess Sancha, in the year 537, in memory of her son Theodoric, who died while hunting, at the fountain Cara Digna, which gave rise to the name of Cardeña.

The idea of the palace that is shortly to render our Sydenham so renowned, seems to have suggested itself to the monks, as lovers of all that can instruct and adorn the world; for Æneas Sylvius relates, that in the vast gardens of the monastery of Königsaal, in Bohemia, was a representation of all the principal countries of the globe, of the mountains, rivers, and seas. Here were shrubs and plants from various regions, and on the walls of polished stone was engraved the whole Bible, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, the letters increasing in proportion to their height from the ground, so that the whole could be read easily by those who walked round it*. At a short distance below Burgos is the celebrated Cistercian nunnery of Santa Maria la Real, called Las Huelgas, founded in 1180 by Alonso VIII., to which pious work the Spaniards ascribed their victory of Las Navas de Tolosa, of which a curious old painting is in the chapel. In this venerable house, in which St. Ferdinand knighted himself; in which his son, Alonso el Sabio, conferred,

* Ap. Dubois, Hist. de l'Abbaye de Morimond, 26.

in 1254, that honour on our Edward I.; in which the gallant Alonso XI. kept his vigil and knighted and crowned himself, used to be seen the articulated statue of St. Jago, which, on some occasions, placed the crown on the head of Spanish monarchs. But many works of curious mechanism were often found in monasteries. The wondrous clock of the abbey of Cluny, in the fourteenth century, contained a perpetual calendar, marking the year, month, week, day, hour, and minute; an ecclesiastical calendar, distinguishing the festivals and offices of each day; the positions of the stars, phases of the moon, and movements of the earth on different days of the week. The chief mysteries of faith were represented by figures in a niche, changing at midnight for another. Each hour was announced by a cock that crew twice, and by an angel who saluted the Blessed Virgin.

Leaving, however, such objects, we may remark, that a great attraction again, for many who pass thus like ourselves, is constituted by the libraries of monasteries. These religious houses formed the oldest asylum for books when exposed to the perils attending the fall of the ancient world; and even to the latest times it was to these houses of the Catholic Church that the most eminent men left their collections. Christopher Columbus bequeathed his library to the Dominicans of the convent of St. Paul of Seville. Caelius Calcagrinus left his to the Dominican convent of Ferrara, in which he wished to be buried. Petrarch left his to the church of St. Mark at Venice; James Alvarotti his to a church and religious community in Padua; Aldus Manutius his to another in Pisa*. Cardinal Maï has been at the pains to exhibit proof that the mediæval monks were guiltless of having caused the loss of those classic works of antiquity which have not been preserved to us. It would be a different task to exculpate, even in this respect perhaps, the destroyers of monasteries. "The blood runs cold," says a late author, with rather amusing fervour, "as the thought arises in the mind that perhaps a perfect copy of Livy was among the books in the abbey of Malmesbury which the Protestants destroyed at the Reformation, or sold to the bakers to heat their ovens. At least it is certain that a great lover of books belonging to this monastery quotes one of the lost decades†." Aleuin describes with rapture the library of York collected by Egbert:

"*Illic invenies veterum vestigia patrum
Quidquid habet pro se Latio Romanus in orbe
Græcia vel quidquid transmisit clara Latinis.
Hebraicus vel quod populus bibet imbre superno
Africa luciflua vel quidquid lumine sparsit.*"

* Jac. de Richebourceq, *Ultima Verba Faetaque*, &c.

† Merryweather, *Bibliomania in the Middle Ages*, 195.

The monastic library of Whitby embraced the choicest works of Greece and Rome, as well as those of the fathers. Grossetete left to the Franciscans of Oxford all his books, which formed a most noble library; and to these were added all the books of Roger Bacon. The archbishop of Armagh complained that the zeal of these friars for collecting books rendered the acquisition of libraries by others difficult. When the Jews were expelled from England by the government, the Franciscans purchased their Hebrew books*. Richard de Bury, describing the obligations which he owed to the libraries of the mendicant friars, says, "When we happened to turn aside to the towns and places where the friars had convents, we used to visit their chests and other repositories of books; for there, amidst the deepest poverty, we found the most exalted riches treasured up: and these friars were not selfish hoarders, but meet professors of enlightened knowledge." It will be difficult for a learned man not to acknowledge that in general the same character still belongs to them, and to almost every monastic family. John Walker, writing from Paris to Dr. Bentley, says, "I could not have leave to take any manuscript to my own lodgings out of the king's library; and I should have been obliged to have left off for some time by a great cold which I got there, if the Benedictine fathers had not offered me a chamber with a fire to study in, in their abbaye†." We shall see proof further on that the monks collecting books were very different men from those Bibliomaniacs of later times, as described by Alexander Barkley in translating Brandt's *Navis Stultifera*:

"Still am I busy, bookes assembling
 For to have plentie it is a pleasaunt thing
 In my conceyt, to have them ay in hand,
 But what they meane do I not understande.
 — my bokes I turne and winde
 For all is in them, and nothing in my minde."

But we are not observing now the hooded men. Let us continue to inspect their habitations.

The fame of many of the monastic libraries has reached modern times. Thus we know that in early Saxon days the monasteries of Wearmouth and Yarrow possessed considerable collections of books, chiefly brought from Rome and France by Benedict Biscop; that in the library of the abbey of St. Mary de la Prê at Leicester were six hundred choice volumes; that the monastery of Rievaulx in Yorkshire possessed also an excellent library. A fine old catalogue of the books in the abbey of Peterborough covers fifty folio pages. The catalogue of the

* *Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica*, 60.

† Bentley's *Correspondence*, ii. 567.

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monastery of Canterbury by Henry de Estria, elected prior in 1285, occupies thirty-eight treble-columned folio pages, and contains the titles of more than three thousand works, comprising both theological and classical authors, of the latter of which there was a brilliant array. We have also a catalogue of the common library of the abbey of Glastonbury, compiled in 1248. Warton says that this library was at one time the richest in England. A portion of an old catalogue of the noble library of Ramsey Abbey, transcribed about the beginning of the fourteenth century, has been preserved. It contains the titles of more than 1100 books. It was in this abbey that flourished so many great Hebrew scholars, and that Holbeach, a monk of the house, wrote his Hebrew Lexicon. Ealdred and Eadmer, abbots of St. Albans in the tenth century, among other discoveries amidst the ruins of Verulam, found a literary treasure which enriched the abbey library. This consisted of an ancient library of books in the language of the old Britons, which a very feeble and aged priest named Unwon was able to explain. Of this house nearly all the abbots having been learned men and lovers of books, an immense collection was there accumulated. The library of the Grey Friars in London was also of prodigious extent. It was founded by the celebrated Richard Whittington, mayor. It measured one hundred and twenty-nine feet in length, and thirty-one in breadth. It can be hardly necessary to add, that these libraries of monasteries contain the rarest and most precious works, since the origin and antiquity of such collections secured their possession of literary treasures of immense value. The first book of Genesis with the autograph notes of St. Augustin, the Psalter of St. John Chrysostom written in letters of gold, a book of prayers by the hand of St. Jerome, were in the library of Cluny. Many of these books were bound in gold and silver and ivory, sculptured and adorned with precious stones. One saw there also the life of Charlemagne by Alcuin, which historical treasure was concealed, through a wise precaution, in leaves of parchment, which bore the title of "Sum of St. Thomas *." In the library of St. Maximinus at Treves was an ancient manuscript containing the book of monastic rules of different fathers, made by St. Benedict, abbot of Anian, about the year 820; and it was this curious and valuable work which was published by Luc Holstein at Rome in two volumes as the *Codex Regularum*.

In the midst of all these literary treasures the paramount dignity of the Bible seems to be recognized even in the classification of the monastic library, as in the old catalogue of the books in Depying Priory in Lincolnshire, which begins thus :

"These are the books in the library of the monks of Depying. First, the Bible." Books relative to the passing events of the day were not wanting in the monastic collections, though perhaps they were not entered on the catalogue with as much care as ancient works of celebrity. For Mathew Paris says on one occasion, "If any one desires to know the impurities of the life and manners of these Tartars, and the fury of the Assassins, he can find the details by searching carefully in the abbey of St. Albans*." Liturgical books of course constituted, by their antiquity and the beauty of their illuminations, a great treasure. "What curious figures," says a visitor, "are emblazoned on the creaking parchment, making its yellow leaves laugh with gay colours. You seem to come upon them unawares. They seem all to be just startled from their sleep by the sound you made when you unloosened the brazen clasps, and opened the curiously carved oaken covers that turn on hinges, like the great gates of a city†." In the library of Exeter in the eleventh century we find mention made of a book of night-song, a precious book of blessings, a book of very ancient nocturnal songs, and a sang bec or song-book of old Saxon songs. What treasures of curious antiquity must have been often discovered by men like Dom Michel Germain searching the manuscripts, who, describing himself in the library of Lucca, says, "It was warm in the rooms, and I might have been taken for a Franciscan, my habit was so grey with dust." A few years after the dissolution, Leland spent some days exploring the book-treasures that were left at Glastonbury after the first havoc. He says that he no sooner passed the threshold than the very sight of so many sacred remains of antiquity struck him with awe and astonishment. The poor monks had thought their books in safe keeping under their roofs. Among some items of money expended for the library of the Grey Friars in London we read, "for the works of Doctor de Lyra, now in the chains, 100 marks, and for the lectures of Hostiensis, now lying in the chains, 5 marks." The reformers were not stayed by such impediments; and Bale himself, though an enemy of monks, could not refrain from saying that "to destroy all these solemyne lybraries in every shyre without consyderacyon is and wyll be unto Englande for ever a most horryble infamy among the grave senyours of other nations." Yet some time later these foreign seniors had to lament in their own country a similar destruction; for in 1790 the French burned 4,194,000 volumes, of which about 25,000 were manuscripts, all belonging to the suppressed monasteries.

We shall observe presently what treasures were possessed by these religious houses in the living; but here, as connected

* Ad ann. 1257.

† Longfollow.

with material objects of interest, we may briefly remark the extent of those constituted by the dead ; for the relics and the tombs within monasteries were sufficient to attract all travellers who were susceptible of being moved by religious or historical associations.

“ *Ossa arida—dabo vobis spiritum et viveris.*”

These sacred words are recalled on being admitted to see the relics which are preserved in monasteries, according to that most ancient custom of which only the abuse admits of being ridiculed. The monks drew many reflections from them ; and though one is here only attempting to show how impressive and attractive monasteries prove even when solely viewed in regard to their material objects, it will, perhaps, be pardonable to cite as an instance the words of a Franciscan friar alluding to them. “ These then,” says Antonio de Guevara, “ are the bones which God did command not to be broken. The world doth desire things that will bow and bend ; but God will none but bones which will not bow or bend. God hath care of the bones of his elect : ‘ *Dominus custodit omnia ossa eorum.*’ Why doth our Lord keep in his treasury nothing but dry hard bones ? Oh, what a great comfort it is to a good man to think that he is one of the bones which Christ doth keep in his treasure-house ; for he loveth those who, like these hard bones, may be tempted and hammered, but never broken. Nothing of the corruption of flesh and blood is fit to be preserved ; but only the pure and the inflexible bones are laid up in it. O my soul ! O my heart ! be thou a snow-white beam for cleanness, and be a hard beam for fortitude. Cleave not to any sinew of covetousness, nor to any blood of pride, nor to any flesh of corruption, nor to any other thing savouring of worldly vanity*.” The great epochs of the Church’s history could have been taught by the relics within monasteries alone. There were preserved whole or in part the remains of the most illustrious men and women that ever adorned Christianity. Canute, king of England, on his way to Rome coming to Pavia, having a peculiar reverence for St. Augustin, from whose body he could scarcely be torn away, obtained at last, by dint of earnest entreaty, a grant of the saint’s arm, with which he returned to England, where he built many convents for the Augustinians ; amongst others, that of Coventry, in which this precious relic was long preserved †. The convent of Assisi contained, as every one knows, the body of its seraphic founder. It stood erect, stigmatized as in life, enclosed in the little chapel where it was placed. Gregory IX.,

* The Mystery of Mount Calvary.

† Crusenius, *Monastic*, August., p. ii. c. xvi.

with several cardinals, saw it in the year 1235, as did Innocent IV. in 1253, Alexander IV. many times, Clement IV. in 1265, Nicholas IV. before he was elected pope in 1288, while general of the order; *Æcubea Suessana*, queen of Cyprus, who left her kingdom to behold it in 1240; Nicholas V. in 1449; *Ægidius Carillus Albornotius*, cardinal of Spain, when apostolic legate; and, in fine, Sixtus IV. in 1476, who afterwards ordered the sacred tomb to be walled up, in order to deliver the friars from the troubles they suffered through the importunity of those who sought to see it. On this occasion the pope declared that the great mystery was then sufficiently authenticated, and that its further manifestation should be reserved for future ages, when the Church would be exposed to the greatest persecution. The whole was so carefully built up and concealed, that thenceforth it was impossible to discover it; only the secret was always known to one friar, who transmitted it at his death to another. Many have tried to explore it, but were obliged to abandon the attempt, finding such resistance from the rocks and masonry. St. Pius V., wishing to contemplate the body, had workmen employed day and night for some time, but in vain. At length all attempts of the kind were forbidden, under pain of excommunication by the holy see, from which the friars themselves were not exempted*.

But let us visit the more ordinary tombs which impart such an interest to monasteries in the mind of every one who is conversant with history, and the heroic and remarkable personages of yore. The monks were not guilty of having been the first to disregard the ancient canons and prohibitions of councils to bury in churches. Having rules made in times of fervour, they long strictly observed them, and conducted themselves on this point with the most laudable severity. Those who inhabited grottoes and deserts were buried in forests and in the heart of mountains; others employed common cemeteries placed without the walls of monasteries, and carried their dead there in carriages. St. Benedict himself received no kind of distinction in this particular. It was not till a much later period that they complied with a prevalent abuse, and thought of interring any one in the interior of monasteries. Walfred, abbot of Palazzolo, in Tuscany, was the first who, in the eighth century, wished to be buried in his own cloister. Later, tombs were introduced into the chapter; but we find no trace of such an innovation before the ninth century. The body of Eudes, first duke of Burgundy, was deposited in 1102, under the front gate of the abbey of Cîteaux, which he had founded†. Omitting for the

* Franc. à Rivotorto *Sacris Conventus Assis. Historia*, tit. 44.

† Piattoli on the Dangers of Interment, cited by Walker in his "Graveyards."

present further observations on this general question, it may be allowable to dwell here for a moment on the poetical and historic associations which grow out of the prevalence of an abuse that the monks were the last to sanction. These sepulchral vaults have witnessed solemn scenes in times past, when the illustrious dead were committed to them. What an instance was presented in the funeral, in the Augustinian convent of Seville, of Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, marquis duke of Cadiz, the hero of the Granada war, who had struck the first blow by the surprise of Alhama, and witnessed every campaign till its close. His body, after lying in state for several days in his palace at Seville, was borne in solemn procession by night to the church of the Augustines, where it was deposited in the tomb of his ancestors. Ten Moorish banners, which he had taken in battle before the war of Granada, were borne along, which still wave over his sepulchre, says Bernaldez, "keeping alive the memory of his exploits as undying as his soul." Yet this very tomb has been sacrilegiously demolished "by the monk destroyers of late years."

We find an imposing list of noble tombs in the convents of the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Carmelites in London. In the church of the former lay interred four queens, four duchesses, four countesses, one duke, two earls, eight barons, thirty-five knights, and in all 663 persons of quality. The most illustrious worth as well as dignity was there commemorated*. Stowe says that there lay buried John, duke of Bourbon, and Anjou, earl of Claremond, Montpensier, and Baron Beaujeu, who was taken prisoner at Agincourt, kept prisoner eighteen years, and deceased 1433. All these, he adds, and five times so many more have been buried there, whose monuments are wholly defaced; for there were nine tombs of alabaster and marble, environed with strikes of iron in the choir, and one tomb in the body of the church, also coped with iron, all pulled down, besides sevenscore grave-stones of marble, all sold for fifty pounds, or thereabouts, by Sir Martin Bowes, goldsmith and alderman of London. One cannot even read without interest the names of those who obtained sepulture with these three orders as given by Stowe. The Benedictines, too, were very rich in remains of the mighty dead. What an illustrious company slept beneath the vaults of Westminster Abbey, and that of Reading! What a mortuary catalogue, again, do we find of prelates and seigneurs who obtained sepulture in the abbey of Pontigny†! In the convent of the Carmelites at Paris many affecting and curious lessons could be read among the tombs.

* Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, Part ii. 4.

† Chailion des Barres, l'Abbaye de Pontigny, 79.

There, amidst those of many princesses, one saw the sepulchre of the keeper of the seals, Michel de Marillac, who had died in banishment after his brother, the *maréchal*, had been decapitated. The epitaph was as follows:—"Here lies Messire Michel de Marillac, keeper of the seals of France, who, having many dignities, always nourished in his heart the esteem of true honour and of eternal riches, doing many good works, maintaining justice, seeking the glory of God, supporting his Church, succouring the oppressed, giving almost all to the poor, and in misfortune manifesting his magnanimity and his contempt for earthly things, living contented and travelling to a holy death." In these lines the courage of the religious orders breaks out.

Grave and useful lessons were found in almost all monasteries, constituted by the sepulchres of men and families whose very names were inspiring to observant youth. Let us observe a few instances. "At Huerta," says a recent traveller in New Castille, "chilled by the winds of the bleak Moncayo mountains, is the famous Bernardine monastery, built on the site of a palace of Alonzo VIII. in 1142, where lie buried many knights of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries who died fighting against the Moors. Here are the tombs of the Finajas, Perez, Martinez, Manriquez, Montuengas, Muños, and others, some of whom had fought at the Navas de Tolosa. In the convent of the Franciscans in Guadalaxara is the vast sepulchral marble vault of the lords of the house of Infantado, with its twenty-five noble tombs. In the Carthusian monastery at Seville you saw the tomb of Columbus. In the convent of the Franciscans at Oxford lay buried Agnellus de Pisa, at whose tomb many miracles were wrought, Beatrice de Falkerton, queen of the Romans, the famous Doctor Roger Bacon, and many other remarkable persons*." In the Cistercian monastery of Campdavena lay buried the counts of St. Paul, who had founded it. The monastery of Ripalorius, two leagues from the city Tribe Tricassina, contained the sepulchres of the Villeharduin family †. The convent of Assisi contained, besides those of its own holy family, the tombs of many illustrious personages. There lay buried Pope Martin IV., Joannes Brennus, king of Jerusalem, and emperor of Constantinople, Æcubea, queen of Cyprus, several dukes of Spoleto, Mary, daughter of the duke of Savoy, Sigismund, Duke Radzivil of Poland, Ægidius Carillus Albernotius, legate of the holy see, Joannes Jordanas Ursinus, Guido of Monte Feltro, whom Dantè has calumniated, Tecri-mius, patriarch of Jerusalem, and nearly all the bishops of

* Collect. Anglo-Min.

† Aubertus Miræus, *Chronicon Cister.*

Assisi*. Nor is it happily every one who can visit, without being impressed by a deep emotion, some vast monastery, secluded from the world by woods and mountains, and see pointed out within it the tombs of kings, perhaps of a long line of monarchs. Whether good or evil in their lives, it is a solemn thought awakened when one considers that, as the old monastic chronicler observes, each of these kings is gone to be confronted with the King of kings, as is said of Louis XI. :

“ Et le pénultime jour d’aoust
Mil quatre cens, comme disoys
Le roy Loys mourut à Tours
Et alla veoir le Roy des Roys.”

It was in or near abbeys that nearly all our ancient kings had sepulture. At first they were buried in the monastery of Iona, and then after the Conquest in the Benedictine monasteries of Westminster, Canterbury, Reading, or other places. Harold had constructed with his own property the abbey of Waltham in honour of the Holy Cross, and there he was buried by his mother†. The first William was interred in the abbey of St. Stephen at Caen, which he had founded and built; Henry I. in the monastery of Reading, “of which,” says William of Newbury, “he was the devout founder and liberal benefactor;” Stephen, in the monastery of Faversham, which he had founded and built in the nineteenth year of his reign; Henry II. in the monastery of Fontevraud‡; “for,” says the historian, “he had always so loved and favoured this monastery, that it seemed but just his body should have rest there in expectation of the first resurrection; and I do not think I ought to pass over in silence what I heard from a venerable monk of the same monastery, who related to me that a certain person of our congregation, who owed a debt of gratitude to the king, most vehemently besought God for his salvation§.” At Grandmont lay some queens of England along with many princes. The sovereigns of other countries had, in like manner, generally their sepulture in religious houses. It was chiefly in the celebrated monasteries of Warnheim and of Guthem, which dated from the earliest period in the national history, that the kings and queens of Sweden were buried. These tombs, with the abbeys themselves, were demolished by the barbarous satellites of Lutheranism under Gustavus Wasa. The tombs of King Eric and of Ingrida, however, were in the monastery of Wadstena, founded by St. Bridget, whither the shrines of St. Bridget,

* Franc. à Rivotorto Sac. Conventus Assisiensis Historia, tit. 42.

† Mat. Paris, Hist. Maj. Anglor. Prolog.

‡ Guil. Neub. Sacr. Anglie. lib. i.

§ iii. 24.

of Mathilda, Catherine, and other saints, used to draw the Swedes on holy pilgrimage*. Antonio de Yepes, of Montserrat, in his general chronicle of the order of St. Benedict, specifies in what abbeys the kings of various countries had their sepulture. The kings of Navarre are buried, he says, some at St. John de la Penna, some at St. Saviour's de Leyre, some at St. Mary's de Nayara, and others at Pompeiopoli. The kings of Arragon have their tombs at St. Victor's, at St. John de la Penna, in Monte Arragon at Poblete, which last monastery was built by Raimund Berenger, king of Arragon and count of Barcelona, in 1153. The kings of Castille are buried at Omnae, at Leon, at Sahagun, at Toledo, in the Escorial. John, first king of Portugal, was buried in the monastery of Battle, in the plain of Aljubarotta, which he had built as a monument of his victory. Alfonso VIII. of Castille was buried in the monastery of Las Huelgas, near Burgos, which he had founded in the twelfth century. The great national historian, Blanca, similarly points out in detail how the ancient kings of Arragon used to choose their sepulture in monasteries. Thus, in 870, Innicus Arista was buried in the monastery of the Holy Saviour Legerensis in Navarre; Sanctius III., the Greater, in 1034, in the monastery of St. Isidore in the same place; Sanctius IV. in 1094, at first in the monastery Montis Arragonum; Ranimirius II. having become a monk, was buried in the monastery in which he made his profession of St. Peter Oscensis; Alfonso II., the Chaste, in 1196, in the monastery of Poblete, which his father had begun to build, and which he finished; Peter II., the Catholic, in 1213, in the monastery of Xixena; James I., Expugnator, in 1276, in the same monastery; Peter III., the Great, in 1285, in the monastery of the Holy Crosses at Barcelona; Alfonso III., the Munificent, in the convent of the Friar Minors, along with his mother, at Barcelona; James II., the Just, in 1327, in the monastery of the Holy Crosses at Barcelona; Alfonso IV., the Benign, in 1336, by his express desire, in the convent of St. Francis of the Friar Minors at Ilerda; Peter IV., the Ceremonious, in 1348, in the monastery of Poblete; John I., in 1395, in the same monastery; Martin, in 1410, in the same, as also Ferdinand I., the Honest, in 1416†. Antonio de Yepes, however, says that no abbey can equal that of St. Denis in the number of royal sepulchres; for in no kingdom do you find buried in one place so many kings who succeeded to their fathers' crowns. It would be a curious study to read the inscriptions on these ancient tombs, whether of seculars or of ecclesiastics, composed by the monks. Those on the

* Theiner, *La Suede et le St. Siège*, I.

† Hieron. Blanca, *Arragonensium Rerum Comment.*

sepulchres of the King Cindasvyndus and of the Queen Elegia were commemorated in Gothic books, which were preserved in the monastery of St. Romanus de Ornija, in the country of Leon. These were the lines :—

“ Si dare pro morte gemmas licuisset, et aurum,
Nulla mala poterant Regum dissolvere vitam.
Sed quia sors una cuncta mortalia quassat
Nec præmium redimit Reges, nec fletus egentes.
Hinc ego te, conjunx, quia vincere fata nequivi.
Funere perfunctam, Sanctis commendo tuendam.
Ut cum flamma vorax veniet comburere terras,
Cæstibus ipsorum merito sociata resurgas.
Et nunc chara mihi jam Reciberga valeto.
Quodque paro feretrum Rex Cindussuinthus amato
Tu ne defleto : restat et dicere summam,
Qua tenuit vitam, simul et connubia nostra.
Fœdera conjugii septem fere duxit in annos
Undecies binos ævi, cum mensibus octo *.”

On the tomb of the Bishop Gerard, in the monastery of Grandmont, were these lines, describing the dead so as to supply instruction to the living :—

“ Qui vivens Domino placuit, sibi semper adherens,
Semper quæ Christi fuerant, non quæ sua, quærens.
Vir simplex, justus, Dominum metuens, sine fraude
Promptus ad omne bonum, dignusque per omnia laude,
Forma gregis, tutor patriæ, protectio cleri,
Virtutis speculum, via morum, regula veri !
Qui cum despiceret mundum, cum paupere Christo,
Pauper obire loco tandem decrevit in isto †, &c.”

Hugo Brunus, seigneur de Lusignac, went to Jerusalem with Gaufred Martel, count of Angoulême, and others ; but God permitted that he should be captured by the Saracens and taken into Egypt. After a long time returning, he took the habit in the monastery of Grandmont, where, after some years of eremitical life, his body was buried, with this epitaph characteristic of monastic thoughts :—

“ Disce hospes contemnere opes et te quoque dignum
Junge Deo ; quisquis nostra sepulchra vides.
Marchia me facili comitem moderamine sensit
Hugonem antiqua nobilitate virum.
Contempsisti tandem fastus, et inania mundi
Gaudia, convertens membra animamque Deo.

* Yepes, II. 214.

† Levesque, Annales Ord. Grandimontis, cent. 11.

Hic inter reliquos spatioso tempore vixi
 Moribus, ac victa, veste, animoque pari.
 Jamdudum cinis, ossa sumus. Quicumque legetis,
 Dicite sint animæ regna beata meæ *."

But we must break off from such poring over lines on brass and marble. The monastic life, perhaps, was supported by means partly of these silent but eloquent monitors—

" There the lone monk would muse and read,
 And meditate on sacred lore;
 Or view the warrior on his tomb,
 With raised hands seeming to implore
 Of heaven a mitigated doom."

It is easy to explain why, during the prevalence of an abuse which ought not to be persisted in, the monasteries should have abounded with the sepulchres of eminent men; for, in the first place, founders and benefactors sought, like Constantine, to be buried near those who they knew would pray for them; and others desired to sleep along with the holy and just; which latter motive alone accounts for so many illustrious persons desiring to be buried in such places as at Assisi for instance, where in the great convent, besides the seraphic father himself, were interred his companions and first disciples—the blessed Bernard of Quintavai, Sylvester of Assisi, William the Englishman, Electus, Valentinus, Leo, Massæus, Ruffinus, Angelo of Reati, John the Englishman, and many others†. So in the old Spanish historical poem, beginning

" Si de mortales feridas
 Fincare muerta en la guerra,"

the Cid is represented saying to his wife Chimena, "If I should fall in this war, let me be carried to the abbey of St. Peter of Cardena; and may you obtain the favour of making my tomb there before the altar of St. James." That illustrious woman, Helen Cornelia Piscopia, who died in her thirty-eighth year at Padua, where she was made doctor in philosophy, at her own dying request was buried by her father among the monks in the monastery of St. Justin, for whose lives and studies she had such a profound veneration‡. Philip II. wished so ardently to be buried in the monastery of the Escorial, which he singularly loved, that in his last sickness he ordered himself to be carried thither from Madrid, though he was so weak that it took seven days to perform this little journey of seven leagues. But there

* Levesque, *Annales Ord. Grandimontis*, cent. 11.

† Franc. à Rivortorto Sac. Conv. Ass. Historia.

‡ Mabillon, *Iter Italicum*, 34.

is another cause, to which may be ascribed the fact of so many interesting tombs being found in monasteries, and that is the generosity and courage of the religious orders in daring to give sepulture to the victims of tyranny, who could have found it no where else. The monastic character evinces no trace of that base timidity which the celebrated Pepys acknowledges that he experienced when he met Lord Sandwich and feared to be seen walking with him. "Lord!" he exclaimed, "to see in what difficulty I stand, that I dare not walk either with Sir W. Coventry, for fear Sir G. Carteret should see me. I was afraid to be seen with him, he having not yet leave to kiss the king's hand." It is a great contrast when we turn from such confessions, to observe how members of the religious orders acted when men in danger or disfavour at the court applied to them: for they were like La Fleur, in the "Sentimental Journey," who advanced three steps forward to his master when the *gens-d'armes* arrested him; they were not like the *maître d'hôtel*, who retired three paces backwards on the same occasion. Thus the Princess de Condé, describing the character of mother Magdalen de St. Joseph, the Carmelite, says: "There were many occasions when she proved that she loved her friends at all times, whether they were in disgrace with the court or not; and that she was willing to run all risks with them. I experienced this myself, when after the death of my brother she received me for some days in her monastery with great charity, though she knew the danger attending showing kindness to me, being at that time in such disfavour with the king." She evinced the same courage with regard to Marillac, the keeper of the seals; for this constancy was shown also in giving burial to the victims of oppression in times of violence or despotism, when it was often as dangerous to receive the dead body as the living person. The murderers of Count Charles the Good inspired such terror that no one ventured to bury his body. Hearing this, Arnulph, abbot of Blandinum, came quickly the next day, and ordered it to be conveyed to his monastery for burial; and it was not till then that both clerks and laymen declared he should be interred in their church at Bruges*. We have already seen an instance of the courage of the Carmelites in regard to the tomb of Marillac. Another similar example was presented after the death of Jean de Montague. Having fixed upon his estate of Marcoussis for his future residence, this remarkable man caused to be built there in two years and a half one of the finest castles in France, the parish church, and a superb monastery, in which he placed Celestins. After his barbarous judgment and execution, the monks of Marcoussis

* Fr. Guatter Tarvonens, Vit. S. Caroli Mart. c. xxix.

used to give every month a certain sum of money to the executioner who had put him to death, in order to prevail on him to preserve the body and keep it distinct against a better time, when it might be buried solemnly, which occasion did not arrive till 1412, three years after his death. In consequence of the whole property having been confiscated, the widow and children of Jean de Montague were unable to prosecute the cause so as to obtain the restoration of his honours ; but, happily for them, the monks of Marcoussis were there to secure the interests of the family. Devoting the gifts which they had formerly obtained from it to that purpose, they sold the precious statues of St. John the Baptist, of St. Anthony, and of St. Anne. They then erected a noble tomb to receive their founder's body, and inscribed on it these lines :—

“ Non vetuit servata fides regi patriæque
Quin tandem injustæ traderet ipse neci.”

On another side they placed what follows :—

“ Pour ce qu'en pais tenois le sang de France
Et soulageois le peuple de grevance,
Je souffris mort contre droit et justice,
Et sans raison. Dieu si m'en soit propice *.”

But we must move on. Thus from a mere glance at the material side of monasteries, it is obvious that this road must prove attractive to many persons, who can hardly fail to be struck and impressed with more or less of interest by beholding them on their passage. It is not necessary even to suppose that such visitors are raised in any manner above the views and feelings of the commonalty ; all that is required is, that they should be simple and unprejudiced observers ; for let us take an instance somewhat analogous, which will enable us to judge how it would fall in with the character of our English population to love a public institution, like a monastery, open to all classes, and yielding so many resources to the humble and the poor ; and let us, for this purpose, as Shirley recommends in one of his plays, speak as it were but to the people in the hangings,—spectators who cannot jeer us, from whom we can receive no disparagement, and who have as much judgment as some men that are but clothes, at most but walking pictures. Come then, I will bring you proof instantly : for observe with what pleasure do mothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and lovers, make a day's excursion from London once a month to visit their little relatives in the great schools on the beautiful hill of Norwood. Remark how the order, and regularity, and discipline that pervade the

whole establishment, all derived from principles that centre in Catholicity, act with a beneficial effect upon their minds. How staid, how decorous, how respectful are they all become! No signs of recognition here by thumps of a parasol to awaken some one that seemed wrapt in a reverie, and no peeping under it in return, as a pretence to make reciprocal such sweet knowledge. Let the same unsophisticated classes visit a noble monastery, and will they not admire? Yes, assuredly, as they used to do, when, with the London apprentices, children of Finsbury and Cheapside, they visited their relations in the beautiful cloisters of Sion or of Richmond, of Chertsey or of Greenwich. The bourne of their summer's excursion was often at such places, delighting them as much as when they met for mere pleasure's sake on hill, in dale, forest or mead, by paved fountains, or by rushy brook, or on the beached margin of the sea. This we know, in fact, was always the case where such houses existed. We read expressly that the multitude liked to see them and to walk through their meadows*. Nor let us overlook, though it may lead us to anticipate what would be suggested later, another advantage which might arise to all classes from visiting a place in which the wants generated by opinion are unknown; for there is something in the atmosphere and in the arrangements too of such a house, which tend, at least for a moment, to unite persons of every condition who visit it; there is something catching in the simplicity of these grave, kind men, hearing each cause, and in even scales poising rich and poor without corruption's veils; something in the expression, in the countenance of these hosts, who have no dictionaries in which they are instructed how, when, and to whom to be proud or humble; who have never set down with curious punctuality how low they should bow to a courtier, and by gradation to a merchant, draper, mercer, or their boy-messengers; who keep no intelligence abroad that may prepare them to receive a very promiscuous company with servile imitations of such as would live apes of fashion rather than as men;—there is something, I say, in all this, that tends to level what is repulsive, and odious, and unnecessary, as the heroic Collingwood, on being elevated to the peerage, remarked to his daughters, in the distinctions of rank,—something to delight all those who feel a manly hate against unmanly pride, and as it were with a kind of conjuring to melt Icarus like the waxen plumes, all that vain ambition which interferes with practical and social benevolence to those who are of humble station. What Vasari says of Raphael, that Heaven accorded to him the power of bringing all who approached his presence into harmony, may be affirmed of the

hooded man and holy sister, who, like this great master, teach us by their example how we should comport ourselves towards persons of the lowest as well as of the highest class, and how we should reduce all to concord and delicious union, a gift of such value and importance that one can never, methinks, sufficiently admire it, "since," as Lord Jeffrey justly says, "we do believe that the desire of being fashionable and distinguished, which is utterly opposed to such union, is a more prolific source of unhappiness among those who are above the chief physical evils of existence, than guilt, disease, or wounded affection; and that more positive misery is created, and more true enjoyment excluded, by the eternal fretting and straining of this pitiful ambition, than by all the ravages of passion, the desolations of war, or the accidents of mortality. This," he adds, "may appear a strong statement, but we make it deliberately, and are deeply convinced of its truth." Your monk or your religious nun, with all their respect and submission, great as if they had studied all the courtesies humanity and noble blood are linked to, cause you to feel how deeply you may have often sinned against both by nourishing this odious folly, "which in its excess," Hazlitt says, "would be enough to explain twenty reigns of terror." They cause you to see that here, among these motley visitors, are the two sorts of gentry, as our old dramatists distinguish them, the gentry artificial and the gentry natural; and that it is barbarism and rudeness to vex a gentle nature in the last. You see by looks and manner that this latter is welcome here as a creature of God's making, who may peradventure be saved as soon as the consecrated person. Your spruce observer of formality can read here, if he never before heard it, that God does not neglect the vulgar, that

"Whate'er some vainer youth may term disgrace,
The gain of honest pains is never base;
From trades, from arts, from valour, honour springs;
These three are founts of gentry, yea of kings."

Greatness begets much rudeness; but here the same coarse benches receive the lowly and the great. Your grandee of the first class (and I have heard the Spanish names are terrible to children in some countries, and used by nurses to still them or to make them eat their bread and butter) disdains not the elbow's touch of poor English Harry, slyly cracking more nuts, during his visit, than would suffice a dozen squirrels. The titled beauty, clad in silks and velvet, whose gates are choked with coaches, and whose rooms outbrave the stars with several kinds of lights, sits down by the side of the modest sempstress, whose poor means only allow her some box, near her low couch, to write on in her garret, and the shawl she wears by day to serve

for coverlet at night. The scholar of larger growth, your trim, stunning youth, who cherishes an over-bookish humour, is confronted with some honest stripling of a different cut, having his cap or glazed hat of the last progress block, and wearing those coarse clothes which the poet Hood looked back to with such regret, as his former garb of boyhood, venturing even to name in verse

“The trousers made of corduroy.”

The expert courtier, meaning to immortalize mortality itself by his temperate exercise, frequent baths, horary shifts of shirts and waistcoats, and even here bending his supple hams, forming his face to all the several postures of affection, and who would be shocked if any one thought that his mouth stands as the vulgar does, receives no other smile in return for all, but what has just now been bestowed on the young gentleman in blue with a hand-basket, as arch London drivers qualify, the butcher's apprentice who passes here, perhaps, if not exactly like the butcher's boy that Socrates considered a good judge of philosophy, yet for a very intelligent, respectable lad; and no leering glance even from a street acquaintance, such another as himself, showing a pretty saucy wit while spying him within these walls, so potent is their spell on all, or rough neglect from any one belonging to them, will be met here to put out of countenance and disgallant the young smooth-chinned straggler, who now transformed into an humble aspirant to gentility, and decked out for a special errand by the mother that loves him, comes with “a patch on both knees and gloves on.” Now though it may seem to be prolonging a digression, the stranger would gladly acknowledge here that all this seems to him calculated to operate as a great attraction; for many can say like him, that from their early years they have loved the common people, and hailed with joy every mode of escape from the social trammels that keep them from them. Their first playmates were almost necessarily the sons and daughters of poor parents, for what rich family can get on without them? their latest friends may have been children of the same sort of houses. They do not want to depreciate or malign any class; they are willing, therefore, to believe that there may be all possible virtue in the heirs of the great and affluent; they would only state a personal and, perhaps, singular misfortune, saying that they themselves are not of the number of those who can give the latter any decided preference from experience of their superior good qualities. Turning from them with the best of wishes, they have found what they loved in persons whom “nobody knows;” their heart has been drawn in affection towards them, and towards whatever influence favours them and smiles on

them. They never enter the carpenter's workshop without wishing to be the friend and confidant of the apprentice ; they never row on the river without revering as a parent the silver head of the aged boatman, who relates the maxims of his mystery ; they never see the youth taking their Sunday ramble without wishing to wear a flower like that which decks their bosom, and that they could adopt a kind of apparel that would proclaim in the wearer but a temporary exemption from labour ; they prefer their haunts, though it were only Primrose Hill, to the exclusive circle, though it were in the pleasure grounds of a prince, redolent of the exotic odours of an eastern clime. Is this wrong ? Is this a taste for low company ? They do not believe it. If it were accompanied with the virtues of which they may feel the absence in themselves, they would recognize it in others as a love of nature and a love of goodness—a love of their fellow-creatures and a love of God. The monastery then is associated in their mind with these affections ; and if we attach importance, as well we may, to such consequences,—for he that weighs men's thoughts opposed to them has his hands full of nothing,—it is not that we can trace no higher results of a moral and religious importance. The air we breathe in such a spot inspires reverence, and revives early impressions of the best kind. Let a man be in what vein he may when entering on this road, he will probably on pursuing it be brought to think, to some degree or other, Catholically of these institutions. The scene, the aspect of the place, the mere buildings, the pictures, libraries, the tombs, and, in fine, the persons he meets there, though strangers like himself, will produce their effect, and put in a new mould every warped soul that can take a right impression. If he set out indifferent, or even with somewhat of hostile feeling, provided it be not such as to render him a sour and irrational antagonist, under the influence of invincible prejudices, he will be more or less changed ; he will be reconciled to virtue, even in this form ; he will be interested, riveted, and, at least for a moment, graced with noble conceptions in accordance with the principles from which such institutions arose.

The track before us, in a strict sense, undoubtedly belongs to the paths as distinguished from the roads of life, according to the observation of Alanus de Insulis : "for," saith he, "ways are spacious, paths narrow : the ways, therefore, signify the precepts, the paths the counsels. The precepts are to be fulfilled by all ; the counsels are observed but by a few *." This path may, no doubt, remain unexplored by many, and almost unknown to them, since the occasions when apparently severe

exactions are made on principle, when the common order of life is to be given up, and the world, in this strict sense, renounced, are comparatively rare, belonging, perhaps, in general to special periods in the history of our race, and coming with their obligations on something like a chosen or elect few. Nevertheless those who are incapable of deriving direction from them can hardly constitute, in any region, or in any age, the majority of men; for either in consequence of historical research, animated by a desire of knowing noble and ancient things, *τῶν ἐνδόξων καὶ παλαιῶν*, or by means of oral communication with others, or of personal and local experience, most men will have occasion to take, at some period or other of their lives, the road of retreat which passes by monasteries, where they may see verified the high inspired language of the Prophets of old, saying, "Montes et colles cantabunt coram Deo laudes, et omnia ligna sylvarum plaudent manibus." "Lo!" exclaims Alanus, "from that general joy neither the cedars of Libanon nor the shrubs of the deserts are excluded*."

For those who pass, therefore, like ourselves, as strangers, this track may be prepared as any other through the forest of life; and it must be our object to observe the different signals and issues, by means of which those who find themselves upon it can penetrate to the centre. In the first place, the very existence of such associations, composed as we find them, and leading to such results as we perceive to follow from them, constitutes a fact that is most significant, and capable of directing intelligent observers to that bourne.

In order that monasteries, as they are constituted in the Western Church, should exist, many things are required that men cannot avoid respecting and admiring when presented to their notice, however they may theorize away their source. Such, for instance, are charity, union, or a spirit of union, a capability of being governed, cheerful obedience without murmurs, self-renouncement, uncorrupt elections to posts of authority, an acquiescence in the law which ordains variety in unity, though to the prejudice of men's own power; above all, faith itself—faith in the invisible and in the reality of a future state. These are indispensable elements, without which no useful association of a monastic kind under one roof can last for any time; and it is but admitting an evident fact to acknowledge, that for any practical purpose, in regard to the formation or perpetuity of such intellectual and active societies, the centre from which these principles emanate cannot be within any of the separated sections of the Christian world, since, as far at least as relates to their producing such institutions they are avowedly inefficient,

or else either indifferent or hostile to them all. Indeed the impossibility is admitted by the more intelligent of those who are willing to remain wherever they may chance to find themselves. "The monastic system," says the learned author of "The Dark Ages," "never can be adapted to meet the present exigencies of the Church of England; and any attempt to revive it must prove a sad and mischievous failure. There can be no obedience; therefore there is, I repeat, a want of power; a want which it is in the present day impossible to meet by any legitimate and reasonable means, our way of living being characterized by an increasing tendency to independence, individualization, and (to use the words in a mild sense) the dissociation and disconnexion of men*."

But let us observe, with a few rapid glances, how the high attributes of truth belong to the associations of religious persons in the Catholic Church. Take then, for instance, at first, the charity which is implied in the existence of such societies, though it is impossible, of course, within any moderate limits to do more than just to give a glance at the mere outlines of a view of this subject. Charity is the essence of all Catholic monachism. "Non enim," says St. Gregory, "clarescit anima fulgore eternæ pulcritudinis, nisi prius hic arserit in officina charitatis." Let it suffice to hear but one witness. In the letters, then, of Oderisius, abbot of Monte Cassino, to the monks of another monastery, wishing them "*beatam vitam et Hierusalem cœlestem*," we read as follows: "'They shall come,' says the Saviour, 'from the east and the west, and shall lie down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.' Therefore it is necessary and worthy that they who endeavour to come to that full society of eternal charity, and of insatiable sweetness, should be bound by the bonds of mutual love in the transit of the present life. For, if from the temporal cohabitation a certain great and sincere affection springs, how much more ought love to abound in the minds of mortals who are to be co-heirs and fellow-citizens for ever? Finally, since the holy and universal Church, through the sole hope of its faith, is bound by such an obligation to exercise fraternal charity, it is necessary that those whom not alone faith, but order and profession of life, make one, should excel in charity, and give an example of simplicity and purity, inasmuch as by the sublimity of their order they are seen to be nearer to the Divinity. Therefore we, through great devotion and sincere charity, have resolved to write familiarly to your holiness, that your monastery and ours may be one, and perpetually bound in a spiritual manner. We are debtors to love, therefore we promise to you sincere

friendship and society ; so that if any of ours should pass to you, or any of yours to us, they may come to our respective monasteries as to their own. We send accordingly to you the names of all our living congregation, and we beg that you will in turn send us a list of all of yours, that our names with yours, and yours with ours, may be inscribed ; so that living and dead we may be protected by our mutual prayers*." It appears as if these were words which no stranger can mistake, and no art counterfeit.

St. Jane de Chantal caused to be inscribed on the wall in the most frequented walk of the monastery the admirable qualities which St. Paul ascribes to charity, as being benign, patient, sweet, believing and suffering all things ; and this tablet she called the mirror of the monastery†. "I have seen," says Rufinus, "some monks who had minds so exempt from all thoughts and suspicion of malice with regard to others, that they had even forgotten the evil that is committed in the world." St. Benedict, in his rule, says that "the steps of humility having been mounted, the monk comes soon to that perfect charity which casts out all fear‡." The rule of St. Columban begins with these words : "Primo omnium docemur Deum diligere ex toto corde, et ex tota mente, et ex totis viribus, et proximum tanquam nosmetipsos§." Similarly, the rule of St. Fructuosus begins with "Post dilectionem Dei et proximi, quod est totius perfectionis vinculum et summa virtutum||." The interior life of the monastery showed proof how well such words were noted and followed. So Dom Gattula, speaking of the ancient monks of Monte Cassino, says, "We read that they had such ardent charity, that if any one of them happened to depart for a time on business, his return was longed for by all as much as an only son's return is desired by his mother ; and on his return they would all fall on his neck, fulfilling our Lord's words, 'Tunc vere discipuli mei eritis, si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem¶.'" Similarly, in the correction of evil charity was shown, as may be witnessed in the tenderness prescribed to abbots towards delinquent monks, and the zeal they were enjoined to show in consoling and confirming them in love**. Expulsion from the monastery and future ineligibility for admission formed, in fact, the last punishment for the incorrigible††. The charity, indeed, that distinguishes such men forces itself on the attention of all who pass. St. Ægil, abbot of Fulda, who had been long perse-

* Ap. Ant. de Yepes, Chronicon Gen. Ord. S. Ben. tom. ii. 507.

† De Changy, Mém. de S. Jeanne de Chant. iii. 4.

‡ Reg. v. 17.

§ Reg. S. Fruct. ap. id.

** Reg. S. Bened. c. 27.

§ Reg. S. Col. I, ap. Luc. Holst.

¶ Hist. Cassinensis, tom. iv. 61.

†† Ib. c. 28, 29.

cuted by his predecessor Ratgarius, having obtained the recal of that man from banishment by interceding with Louis-le-Debonnaire, the emperor exclaimed that he was a true Christian who prayed for his persecutors *. But it is not alone charity in general and in the abstract that is required in such houses; those who inhabit them must be able, in point of fact, to dwell together in unity, and that, too, without assistance from the esprit de corps, which is the only cement at the disposition of other corporate bodies; for that spirit would be incompatible with the moral sense, and the keen sensitiveness to pity, friendship, and generosity, which must belong to the aggregate as well as to the individual conscience in the religious associations of Catholicism.

Now the union of hearts is most remarkably displayed in monasteries. Even the ardent desire of visiting the threshold of the Apostles at Rome did not prevent St. Aldhelm from grieving at the thought of being separated for a short time from his brethren in the monastery of Malmesbury †. To witness how the inhabitants of cloisters were united with each other in feelings and affection and purpose, we need only refer to the letters of the great French Benedictines in the age of Louis XIV. "Fac quod voles," writes Mabillon to Dom Gattula, "modo ut me redames: nam quantum te amem non capies, quando ipse vix capio ‡." On the death of Dom Michel Germain the grief of his brethren is most affectingly expressed. Mabillon was sick at the time, but he ordered himself to be carried into the room of his dying friend, and there, says Dom Tassin, "these two friends embraced each other for the last time." Mabillon, relating this event to Dom Gattula, says, "No greater grief could befall me than this, arising from the death of my companion, Dom Michel Germain. For more than twenty years we lived like one, studying together, labouring together, travelling together. I thought his health robust, and doubted not but that he would be a staff and comfort to my old age, when, lo! on the same day we both fell sick, but he, alas! on the fourth was taken off, leaving me scarcely breathing, but, in fine, alive to feel my loss. What state of mind do you think must be mine, having lost my companion, and the aider of my studies? Scarcely a day passes that tears do not fall from my eyes for so unexpected a calamity §." A little later, and Ruinart, relating to Dom Gattula the death of Mabillon, says that every one

* Raderus *Bavaria Sancta*, ii. 130.

† *Vita Aldhelmi*, Faricio auctore.

‡ Correspond. de Mab. et de Montfaucon avec l'Italic, let. cclxxxiii.

§ Let. cclxxxiii.

of their congregation grieved as if he had lost a father or a patron*. How such men lived together can be easily conjectured.

The words indeed of an ancient rule were these, "*Non tibi aestimes ullos proximiores parentes quam qui tecum sunt in cellula fratres*†." St. Diaodochus considers that this absolute union of minds enters into the very definition of a monk; for he says, "*Monachus est, qui unum se ex numero omnium ducit, quia se in unoquoque sine ullo discrimine videre existimet*‡;" and St. Peter Damian, writing to Henry, archbishop of Ravenna, in praise of Alexander, a monk of Monte Cassino, supposes that no member of that community would accept any commendation which was not addressed equally to the whole; for after saying, "It seems to me that he is learned and clever, virtuous beyond suspicion, and pious in giving alms," he continues, "More I will not add, ne non videar universitatis amator, sed singularitatis assertor§." But let us hear St. Bruno, bishop of Signia and abbot of Monte Cassino, speaking of this union in the monastic order: "The queen of Saba," saith he, "came from the bounds of the earth to hear Solomon, 'Et ecce plusquam Solomon hic.' This said the Creator and Lord of Solomon of himself; and truly we may say not alone of Him, but of his servant the blessed Benedict, 'Et ecce plusquam Solomon hic.' In what, do you ask, is he greater? In wisdom, in justice, in fortitude, in temperance; and, moreover, he is richer and more powerful. Oh! if that queen had come to blessed Benedict, and had heard the wisdom from his lips; and even if now she could come and see his houses, servants, and ministers, his sons and brethren, their tables and food; how all things are ordered, how well disposed; how to all there is one heart and one soul, and no one says that any thing is his own, but all things are common; how they all love each other, how they all obey each other in turns,—what love, what charity is between them; if, I say, that prudent Queen Saba, so wise, and so devout to God, could see all these things, truly she would lose all her former spirit, because she would receive the grace of the Holy Ghost||." Let the principles and graces which have their centre in the Catholic religion, reviving the charms of nature, be wholly excluded, and where will you ever see realized such a state as this? How many things will occur to disturb harmony when there will be seen persons under one

* Lett. ccxciii.

† Regula S. Macarii ap. Luc. Holstein, Codex Reg.

‡ De Perfect. Spir. c. 120.

§ D. Gattula, Hist. Cassinensis, vii. 368.

|| Ap. D. Gattula, ib. vii. 346.

roof, "whom no cordiality can warm, no tears move,—from whom no happy reconciliation is to be had, no cheering smile or generous word. With Christian phrases ever on the tongue, they will make those near them feel what severe punishment a good, yet stern, a conscientious, yet implacable person can inflict on those who have offended :—without one overt act of hostility, one upbraiding word, they can contrive to impress others momentarily with the conviction that they are beyond the pale of favour."

"In families," says Johnson, "where there is or is not poverty, there is commonly discord." The religious communities of Catholicism, whether poor or rich, do not exhibit such results, but this is owing to their possession of an admirable and exclusive secret. Let others, who intentionally and systematically oppose Catholicism, strain all their sinews and contribute all their overflowing riches to imitate such institutions in this respect, and the attempt will be a failure beyond all possibility of an alternative. Nor ought this to surprise any one ; for how should spirits keep united when submitted to the action of a universal solvent ? See the dissentious come,—

"Mazed in the errors of their own confusion ;
As if their dissolution should precede
Their yet not perfect being."

Accordingly, we are now told by a great author, that "as for community, with the monasteries expired the only type that we ever had in England of such an intercourse ; that there is no community in England ; that there is aggregation, but aggregation under circumstances which make it rather a dissociating than a uniting principle. As for me," he concludes, "I prefer association to gregariousness." Nor again can monasteries exist where resolved minds are deaf to counsel, and where the meekest are to be awed by none but their own wills. Can wills not used to any law beside themselves suffer the obligation of severe and positive limits, submit to be controlled, employed sometimes in servile offices, against the greatness, perhaps, of high birth and sufferance of nature ? For such associations to last, there must be obedience, and even that blind obedience, exclusive of all murmuring, which is now so often stigmatized and feared, though it is strictly conformable to the law of justice, since it includes submission only in things where a superior is superior, and not in cases where he would exact it in things in regard to which he is himself a subject, as in civil or political affairs *. "Men in the world," says Dom de Ranécó, "regard obedience as a yoke of iron ; the religious esteem it a

subjection of benediction. The one suppose that a monk will have more repose when his will is less restrained; the others consider that he cannot have true and constant peace until he has relinquished it*." Some persons, haunted, perhaps, by a phantom of their own creation, seem terrified at the idea of this obedience. They say, like Nasica to Blossius of Cuma, "But if Tiberius Gracchus had ordered you to burn the Capitol?" they might hear the same reply given, with other reasons to explain it, and far different assurance, "He would never have given such orders." The prelates consulted in 1761 respecting the obedience practised by the Jesuits, replied to the king, saying, "These expressions relative to obedience towards the superior in their constitutions can astonish and scandalize only those, sire, who are strangers to the language of ascetic writers, and who have no idea of a perfection which is not for their own state." The queen-mother having heard that Mlle. Crussolles d'Usez had joined the Carmelites, asked permission to see her. "Knowing that you wished to enter some religious order," she said to her, "I had promised to make you an abbess; but why do you now, by coming here, make it impossible for me to keep my word?" "Madame," replied sister Anne of the Angels, "I wish for nothing but to be the last in the house of God." Why should we pity the obedience of a person who spontaneously chooses to be obedient, and to whom might justly be applied the poet's lines,

"——— cui dulce volenti
Servitium, cui triste nihil; qui sponte, sibi que
Imperiosus erat †?"

Yet no two things could be more dissimilar than servility and such obedience. "Being but one," says an ancient monk, "and having but one abbot, you ought to be abbots to yourselves. Can one abbot, who has but two eyes and two ears, see and hear all? Must he not be absent at times? Be abbots to yourselves then, and whether present or absent fear equally your abbot, since God is ever present‡." How impressive is it to hear the monk beginning his discourse "de humilitate et obedientia, et de calcanda superbia," speak as follows: "To seculars in the Church we address ourselves in one way, but to you in another. To them we say sometimes things which have more sound than virtue; for, like infirm persons, they are pleased rather with the sounds of words than with the virtue of God; but you in the name of Christ are not so delighted; but what you desire to

* De Rancé de la Sainteté et des Devoirs de la Vie Monast. 102.

† Statius, Sylv. ii. 6.

‡ Novati Cath. Sententiæ ap. Luc. Holst. Cod. Reg.

hear is the word of salvation—"via alia ad Deum non est nisi humilitas, obedientia, et caritas*." So, after quoting the Apostle, "omnia facite sine murmuratione," St. Basil adds, "Murmuring is wholly alien from monastic unity†." Brother Peter John Olivi, having composed certain treatises on the blessed Virgin, a little too much abounding, we are told, in his own sense, was commanded by the general of his order to burn them with his own hand. He obeyed, and immediately after went to say mass, with such peace of mind had he obeyed his superior‡. "Plato believes," says Plutarch, "that the virtue of obedience, quite as much as the office of command, requires that generous nature and that philosophic education which, by a mixture of sweetness and humanity, moderates the impetuosity of anger§." A history of these institutions would fully verify his observation. To those wavering and alarmed at such an obligation, the monk might reply in the words of one of our old dramatists, and say, "Obedience is the first step unto science; stay, and be wise."

To this capability of being governed must be added the security which Catholicism supplies for obtaining the best persons to govern. Corruption is a tree whose branches are of an unmeasurable length; they spread every where, and the dew that drops from thence hath infected some chairs and stools of authority. But Catholicism, in general, seeks to impress all subject to it with a sense of the turpitude and guilt of being swayed by unworthy motives in voting at an election for any one. It was the spirit of the monastic character to trust much to the divine interposition in regard to elections, and in illustration of this remark we might cite the instance recorded of St. Francis, who, at Ancona, finding a crowd of brethren all assembled, wishing to accompany him to the East, though it was not possible to receive so many on board, and fearing to choose any to the prejudice of others, called from among the plebeian crowd a little boy who knew none of them, saying to the brethren, "Let us ask this child which of you shall go with me." Then, turning to him, "Boy," said he, "is it the will of God that all these brethren should pass with me?" He answered, "No." "Well then, tell us which of them does God wish should be my companions?" He answered, touching them as he spoke, "This one, and this, and that," and so he touched eleven, saying, "It is the will of God that these should go with you;" and all who were not touched were resigned, recognizing

* Novati Cath. Sententia ap. Luc. Hist. Cod. Reg. 11.

† Regula S. Basilii, lxiii.

‡ Weston on the Rule of the Friar-Minors.

§ In Vit. Galb.

the divine will in this manifestation*. The monastic institute in an especial manner sought to obviate the peril of a corrupt election. Benedict, abbot of Weremouth, used to say that in electing an abbot, no attention should be paid to birth; and truly, continues Bede, "he would repeat, that of two evils it would be incomparably more tolerable for me to see, if the Lord should judge fit, the place in which I built a monastery reduced to a solitude for ever, than that I should be succeeded by a brother who walked not in the way of truth; therefore, brethren, elect always him who is best qualified by wisdom and manners†." So far were monastic superiors from cherishing a selfish desire of power, that sometimes those of the English monasteries imparted their authority to a second person. There were then two abbots at the same time; and this was to provide against the frequent absence of the superior, and his uncertain return from beyond sea‡. When Guillaume was elected abbot of St. Germain, in 1387, he for a long time refused. At length being prevailed on, when asked, according to the form, whether he consented, he replied, "Nec cupiditate motus assentior, nec superbe recuso§."

On the other hand, if a delicate and inflexible sense of duty prompted resistance sometimes to an unjust influence, there was no attempt at seeking an insulting triumph over it, or obtaining any other result but what the interest of religion required. In 1429, the commanders of the order of Mercy, while assembled in the convent of St. Eulalie, at Barcelona, to elect a general, received a letter from the king of Arragon, requesting them to elect Father Antonio Dulhan as the most proper person. Greatly afflicted at this letter, they proceeded, however, and elected, with only three voices for the latter, Noel Garer. This great and good man then stepped forward, and, though canonically elected, begged to decline the office for the good of peace, and entreated them to proceed to another election, when, at his prayer, Dulhan was elected||.

A resolute stand against undue influence proved often a fruitful source of persecution. "O pride of monks! O obstinate perversity of the hooded race!" exclaimed the messengers of King Henry III., demanding who were the men that refused to give their votes as he had required, when the monks of Winchester had resisted the king through conscience, refusing to elect his favourite¶. Catholicism produced, however, innumerable men of secular power, who, in the exercise of an influence

* Bucchius, 142.

† Ven. Bede, Hist. Abb. Wiremuth.

‡ Id.

§ Chavan de Malan. Hist. de O. Mab.

|| Hist. de l'Ordre de la Mercy, 373.

¶ Mat. Paris, ad ann. 1241.

attached to it, whether rightly or not, sought only to co-operate with the best and purest of the monastic institute. When a question arose on some domestic measure in the abbey of Montserrat, Philip II., who heard of the circumstance, wrote to the abbot, desiring him to take the opinion of each monk separately before concluding any thing *. Cæsar of Heisterbach, in his quaint style, relates an amusing instance. "Under the Emperor Frederic, grandfather of this Frederic," he says, "one of the imperial abbeys having lost its abbot, two were elected, and they were unable to agree. One of them had offered Frederic a large sum of money to assist him; but the emperor, discovering that his opponent was a better man, a simple man, and strict disciplinarian, took counsel how he should remove the unworthy, and confirm the other's election. So he said to one of the community, 'As I have heard all monks are bound to carry a needle, ask then the disorderly brother elect, as you sit in chapter, to lend you his needle to prick your finger; and if he has not one, you will have cause to accuse him of irregularity.' Which being done, and he not having one, the same monk asked the other elect to lend him his, who produced it immediately. Then the emperor said aloud, 'You are the true monk, if I am not mistaken, and worthy of being in honour; whereas your opponent has shown himself unworthy of it by his irregularity; for in the least things being negligent, he would be no less so in the greatest.' And so the other's election was confirmed." Is there such virtue in a needle? "It is not in the needle," replies Cæsarius; "but it is a sign of virtue and humility in a monk to mend his habit when torn †."

Catholicism is seen, in monastic history, to produce superiors who reform themselves, when their authority has been abused even for good, and who accept the obligation of doing so imposed on them by their dependants. The abbot of St. Edmundsbury having placed a certain clerk as cellarer to reform abuses, the monks were much displeased, though the consequences had been most beneficial. However, adds the house chronicle, "On the abbot's return home, having it in purpose to translate the blessed martyr, he humbled himself before God and man, meditating within himself how he might reform himself, and make himself at peace with all men, especially with his own convent. Therefore, sitting in chapter, he commanded that a cellarer and sub-cellarer should be chosen by our common assent, and withdrew his own clerk, saying, that whatsoever he had done, he had done it for our advantage, as he called God and his saints to witness, and justified himself in various ways ‡."

* Dom Montegut, Hist. de Montserrat, 31.

† Illust. Mir. et Hist. Mem. vi. c. 15. ‡ Jocelin of Brakelond.

This curious author relates as follows the circumstances attending the election of the great Abbot Sampson of St. Edmundsbury. "The abbey," he says, "being thus vacant, oftentimes, as it was our duty, we besought God and the holy martyr St. Edmund, that He would vouchsafe to us and our church a meet shepherd, thrice every week singing the seven penitential psalms prostrate in the choir, after going forth from chapter; and there were some amongst us to whom, had it been made appear who should have been the future abbot, would not have prayed so devoutly. As concerned the choice of an abbot; assuming the king gave us free election, many spoke in diverse ways, some publicly, some privately; and 'so many men, so many opinions.' One certain person said of another certain person, 'That brother is a good monk, a likely person; he is well conversant with the rule and discipline of the Church; although he may not be so perfect a philosopher as others, he is well able to be an abbot. The Abbot Ordning was an illiterate man, and yet he was a good abbot, and wisely governed this house: it is read in fables, that it had been better for the frogs to have chosen a log for a king, upon whom they might rely, than a serpent, who venomously hissed, and after his hisses devoured his subjects.' Another would answer, 'How may this be? how can an unlearned man deliver a sermon in chapter, or to the people on holidays? how can he who doth not understand the Scriptures attain the knowledge of "binding and loosing?" whereas the cure of souls is the art of arts, and science of sciences. Far be it that a dumb statue should be set up in the church of St. Edmund, where many learned and studious men are well known to be.' Also said one of another, 'That brother is a kind man, affable and amiable, peaceful and well-regulated, open-hearted and liberal, a learned man and an eloquent, and beloved by many, in-doors as well as out; and such a man might, with God's permission, become abbot to the great honour of the Church.' Also said a certain one of his fellow, 'That man is almost wiser than all of us put together, both in secular and ecclesiastical matters; a man of lofty counsel, strict in rule, learned and eloquent, and of proper stature; such a prelate would beseech our church.' The other answers, 'Very true, if he were of known and approved reputation. His character is questionable, although common report may lie.'

"All this hearing, I used to reply thus to these critics, saying, that if we were to stay in the choice of an abbot until we were to find one who should be above disparagement or fault, we never should find such an one, for no one alive is without fault, and 'nihil omni parte beatum.' Upon one particular occasion I was unable to restrain myself, but must needs blurt out my own private opinion, thinking that I spoke to trusty ears; and I then

said, that a certain person, who formerly had a great regard for me, and had conferred many benefits upon me, was unworthy of the abbacy, and that I considered another was more worthy; and, in fact, I named one for whom I had less regard. I spoke according to mine own conscience, rather considering the common weal of the Church than my own advancement; and true it was what I said, as the sequel proved."

At length thirteen brethren were chosen and sent to the king, to proceed to the election. "Upon the morrow, therefore, those thirteen took their way to court. Last of all was Sampson, the purveyor of their charges, because he was sub-sacrist, carrying about his neck a little box, in which was contained the letters of the convent,—as if he alone was the servant of them all,—and without an esquire, bearing his frock looped under his elbows, who, going out of the court lodge, followed his fellows afar off." On their arriving at court, "The bishop of Winchester said, 'We see what it is you wish to say; from your address we collect that your prior seems to you to have been somewhat remiss, and that, in fact, you wish to have him who is called Sampson.' Dennis answered, 'Either of them is good, but, by God's help, we desire to have the best.' To whom the bishop, 'Of two fit men the most perfect should be chosen; speak out at once: is it your wish to have Sampson?' And it was answered distinctly by many, and by the major part of us, 'We will have Sampson,' no one gainsaying; nevertheless, some studiously held their peace, being fearful of offending either one or the other. Sampson was then named to the king, and, after a brief consult with those about him, we all of us are called in; then the king said, 'Ye present to me Sampson; I know him not; had ye presented to me your prior I should have accepted him, because I have known and am well acquainted with him; but now I will do as you desire me. Take heed to yourselves; by the very eyes of God, if ye act unworthily, I shall call you to severe account.'

"Then we returned to the abbey. Himself, indeed, encompassed by a multitude of men, espying the convent, dismounted from his horse outside the threshold of the gate, and causing his shoes to be taken off, was received barefooted, the prior and sacrist on each side conducting him. We, on our parts, chanted the responses 'Benedictus Dominus' in the office of the Trinity, and then 'Martyri,' and 'Amen' being responded by all, he retired to his chamber, spending his day of festival with more than a thousand dinner guests, with great rejoicing." Fourteen years after his election, his hair became white as snow from the troubles and fatigues which he had to suffer.

An instance in which the struggles between passion and conscience, during an election, ended in the triumph of the latter,

is thus related by the annalist of the same monastery. There was occasion to elect a new prior. "The abbot, therefore, having returned, and sitting in chapter, set forth to us amply and eloquently enough what sort of man ought to be appointed prior; and John, the third prior, answered, in the presence of us all, that the subprior was a worthy and fit person. But the greater number immediately opposed, saying, 'A man of peace, let a man of peace be given us.' Two of us, therefore, replied to them, saying, that such a person should be appointed who knew how to direct the souls of men, and to distinguish 'between leprosy and leprosy,' which saying gave great offence, for it seemed to favour the part of the subprior," whom most blamed secretly, "saying that he was a passionate, impatient, restless, turbulent, and fretful man, a litigious person, and a disturber of peace, deriding him, and saying, 'The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.'" The subprior, however, was chosen.

Then the historian continues as follows. "The chapter being over, I being hospitaler, sate in the porch of the guest-hall, stupified, and revolving in my mind the things I had heard and seen; and I began to consider closely for what cause and for what particular merits such a man ought to be advanced to so high a dignity. And I began to reflect, that the man is of comely stature and of personable appearance; a man of handsome face and amiable aspect; always in good temper; of a smiling countenance, be it early or late; kind to all; a man calm in his bearing, and grave in his demeanour; pleasant in speech, possessing a sweet voice in chanting, and expressive in reading; young, brave, of a healthy body, and always in readiness to undergo travail for the need of the Church; skilful in conforming himself to every circumstance of place or time, either with ecclesiastic or with secular men; liberal and social, and of easy temper; not spiteful in correction, not suspicious, not covetous, not drawing, not slothful; expert and fluent of tongue in the French idiom, as being a Norman by birth."

In general, we may remark, first, that to these elections were called all the community. There was a kind of universal suffrage, without inconvenience or danger for any interests. In the constitutions of the hermits of St. Romuald of Camaldoli, the words of St. Benedict are cited: "All are to be called to give advice, quia sæpe juniori Dominus revelat quod melius est*." From the above passages, full of such minute details, one perceives that these old writers were not influenced by the vile phrase, as a modern critic styles it, of which bad historians are exceedingly fond, "the dignity of history;" they suppress

no facts which may be considered as part of the materials for the construction of a science, and which constitute the really precious part of history. These anecdotes serve also to prove incidentally that the qualifications for a good superior were rightly estimated, though, it is true, there is no want of direct testimony on which to found the same conclusion. In the constitutions of Camaldoli, we read that "the abbot should always exalt mercy in judgment, and follow the maxim, '*Ne quid nimis*,' lest, by trying too violently to get rid of rust, he should break the vessel; that he should study to be loved, rather than feared; and that he must banish suspicious from his breast, or else he would never rest *." In another and ancient rule, speaking of the superior, it is said, "*Non mutet sententiam, sed firmus sit solidique decreti; justus, cuncta considerans. judicans in veritate absque appetitu gloriæ †.*"

Another thing, again, essential to the existence of monasteries which Catholicism supplies, and which all its opponents, in modern ages, avowedly withhold, is the principle itself of variety in unity in the whole system of ecclesiastical institutions. Catholicism is always, as Linnæus said of nature, "like herself;" but this identity of essence and principle is not without a beautiful diversity in form and development. The government of the Church, though monarchical, descends through many delegates; and in this respect the forest presents an analogy in every tree and herb; for as the whole art of each plant is still to repeat leaf on leaf without end, going from knot to knot, so here every thing, at the end of one use, is taken up into the next, each series punctually repeating every organ and process of the last. We are adapted to infinity. Catholicism, as is said of the creative force, like a musical composer, goes on unweariedly repeating a simple air or theme, now high, now low, in solo, in chorus, ten thousand times reverberated, till it fills earth and heaven with the chant. "It is the last lesson of modern science," says a recent author, "that the highest simplicity of structure is produced, not by few elements, but by the highest complexity. Man is the most composite of all creatures; the volvox globator is at the other extreme."

Nevertheless, this truth seems to be overlooked in all systems of religion separated from the Catholic Church; they may seek to imitate her conformity, but it will be to produce a monotonous and lifeless routine, which, after a term of years, becomes an anachronism. They may copy her mode of government, but it will be only to add to other errors what a learned author designates as the Episcopalian heresy: according to which the episcopacy becomes a withering and depressing despotism, which

* Reg. c. 64.

† Regula Orientalis, xvii. ap. Luc. Holst.

will suffer nothing to grow up and spiritually benefit men but itself; suspicious of charity, of self-renoucement, and of obedience; disbelieving the need of veins as well as of arteries in the mystical body, through which vital principles might circulate, and reducing all things in the Church to the immediate control of the bishop, as the revolutionary and rationalist governments would subject every thing in the state to the direct and absolute direction of itself. But, as the count de Maistre says, "Does a regiment form a state in a state because it depends on its own colonel, and would feel humbled if subjected to another? Under pretext of unity, to deprive it of its natural government, and place some one else over it, would be absurd." Faith represents the Church as containing analogies with the human body, in which are not only arteries but veins; and an attempt to inoculate on Catholicism the Episcopalian monopoly, as in the modern sects, would never succeed; whereas, where the latter prevails, the existence of monasteries would be an anomaly, and viewed as the result of a doctrinal, fundamental error.

Again, this life of active seclusion, philanthropic retreat, self-renoucement, and stability, involves the necessity of principles which have no other centre but the Catholic religion. Where all its influences are banished:

" ——— Men are afraid
Of monasteries, or aught that yields the thought
Of sanctity, and love, and prayer."

It is true in theory the poet and philosopher find the retirement involved in a monastic life admirable. Each, on beholding it, will exclaim with Shamont:—

" This is a beautiful life now ! Privacy,
The sweetness and the benefit of essence.
I see there's no man but may make his paradise ;
And it is nothing but his love and dotage
Upon the world's foul joys that keeps him out on't ;
For he that lives retired in mind and spirit
Is still in paradise, and has his innocence
Partly allow'd for his companion too,
As much as stands with justice."

But poets and philosophers are always, at the least, Catholic by half; and men of other character naturally enough feel no charm in such a state of privacy, though it be at fountain heads and within pathless groves. Persons, in fact, must be well furnished with spiritual, moral, or literary resources when they are willing to hear nothing of what passes daily in the political or ambitious world, as in these religious houses, where the inmates

seem of more constant nature than to inquire after state news. The porterness, says an ancient rule, ought to be one of the aged—"quibus mundus silet"—who can say from the heart, "*Mihi adhaerere Deo bonum est.*" The porterness is not even to mention to the inmates the news or the fables that may be communicated to her by secular persons at the gate*. But if you are to be professors of the vague and uncertain, how can you dispense with hearing about what passes daily in the city and the forum, which must constitute the ground and staple of your opinions?

Then, to look further still, men of the same class, who can never be happy but by the anticipation of change—whose next wish, after having changed, is to change again—cannot be expected to comprehend those vows of stability which seem to exclude the foundations of their happiness. They will now, at least, regard them as being a government worn out of fashion, and long since given over by the state and country. Take away central principles, and who is stable? who would vow stability? who would not shudder at the thought of doing so? Unless, indeed, he was content to be like those—

"Who having sworn too hard-a-keeping oath,
Study to break it, and not break their troth.
What furies govern man! we hazard all,
Our lives and fortunes, to gain hated memories;
And, in the search of virtue, tremble at shadows."

Yet nothing is found more natural than stability in the Catholic communion. So St. Anselm says:

"Vovistis fratres, vovistis, vestra rogamus,
Vivite solliciti reddere vota Deo.
In majestatem divinam peccat abundè
Quisquis quæ non vult reddere, vota vovet.
Vovistis Domino, vestros convertere mores,
Jam non peccetis, sit modus et vitiis.
Nunc humilis vivat, qui vixerat ante superbus,
Sit castus, quisquis luxuriosus erat.
Quærebat census aliquis? captabat honores?
Huic jam vile-ant census honosque sibi.
Gaudebat dapibus, gaudebat divite mensa?
Nunc tenuem victum sobria cœna dabit †."

Stability, in regard to the monastic profession, is found to be essential to its virtue. "I, at least," says Father Andrea Pinto Raminez, "have known no one who did not furnish proof that in leaving one order for another, he did not depart in order to

* *Regula ejusdam*, c. iii.

† *Ap. Hæftenus, Oeconomix Monast. lib. ii. c. 6.*

renew his spirit in a different order; and who, changing his habit, changed his manners for the better*.”

The seclusion of the cell, again, can only be possible or good where such retirement is valued, understood, and sanctified, that is, where Catholicism reigns. Let persons without its objects and influences keep aloof from the world, apart from their fellow-men, disdainful of society as frivolous, and they will give proof, that if by too much sitting still the body becomes unhealthy, the mind grows distempered sooner. It is not so in these retreats, where kindness and charity seem only to increase with a solitude which does not mean separation from mankind. It is related of St. Stephen of Grandmont, that in Muret he had a certain book decently bound in which but little was written, and that he kept this shut up in a book-case, before which, as often as he passed, he used to bow his head, to give example to the brethren that as long as they remained cloistered they were entitled to honour, but were valueless when they left it, as the book which, when taken out and opened, was found to contain but little†. The old historians do not disdain to describe the voluntary stability of many like Ratpert, the monk of St. Gall, “seldom putting his foot out of the cloister, and making one pair of shoes last a twelvemonth,” as Ekkehard relates. “Thy cell, if thou continue in it, grows sweet,” says the Imitation; “but if thou keep not to it, it becomes tedious and distasteful.” Neither, again, without Catholicism can you have these palaces of silent happiness, the monastic, discreet, and charitable silence which produces the man who, as is said in the sacred Scripture, “sedeat solitarius—et tacebit.”

The Abbot Pambo desired to be taught the Psalms, and his teacher beginning with the thirty-eighth—“Dixi custodiam vias meas, ut non delinquam in lingua mea”—he said that was enough, and that he would learn no more till he had practised that precept‡. The age of Louis XIV. heard the same lessons. “O silence!” exclaims De Rancé, “the perfection of hermits, the ladder of heaven, the mother of compunction! O silence! that teachest the science of the saints, the divine art of prayer! O silence! the nurse of respect, that restrainest the passions, that enablist the soul to approach God, and to receive a divine illumination§!” The control of the tongue therefore, which, as we observed on other roads, Catholicism is so well accustomed to supply, is an essential element in the monastic creations, without which neither the life of contemplation, nor even the active united life in community, would be long possible.

* Vit. Mar. d’Escobar II. lib. ii. 20.

† Levesque, Annales Ord. Grandimontis, I.

‡ Socrat. Tripart. Hist. viii. 1.

§ De la Sainteté, &c.

St. Augustin, addressing his brother hermits, says, "Silentium, Fratres charissimi, inter cæter avobis in eremo summe necessarium est *." But let us hear what say the fathers of Camaldoli, legislating however, we must remember, only for men who had retreated in weariness from the world's babble. "There can be no dispensation from silence," say their constitutions, "on any Sunday but that of Quinquagesima, or on any festival excepting St. Martin, or during both Lents, or on any Friday or day to which abstinence is transferred, or from complin till prime. Similarly there are places in which no dispensation from silence can be had, namely, the church, the sacristy, the chapter-room of confession, and the refectory. It is the custom to dispense from silence twice in the week in winter and thrice in summer, after prime in the vestibule of the church, from prime till complin; but in their conversations the hermits must never speak any thing secular or vain, 'sed sicut eloquia eorum casta, pacifica, sine contentione aliqua, spiritualia et sancta.' In the hermitage nothing even that can otherwise disturb the silence of meditative men must be permitted, 'garrulæ aves et omne animal latrabile, ludicrum, atque inquietum penitus ab Eremitis nostris arceantur †.'"

For supplying the principle of such discipline, as required by a few persons of the human family, Catholicism ought to be reproached by no moralist, for it includes nothing irrational. St. Ambrose, in his offices, places the patience of silence, the being able to keep silence, as one of the chief foundations of virtue. "To speak little, and in this little to be succinct and brief, is a thing greatly praised by all men of true science," says Pedro Messie, gentleman of Seville, in his "Diverse Lessons." And a late English writer, showing the happiness of being occasionally left to oneself and to solitary walks, contrasts, as if with a view to what prevails in monasteries, the awkward silence of company in the world, broken by attempts at wit or dull common-places, with that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. Ask the man of lofty mind, unjustly accused, if silence has nothing to recommend it? Ask the ingenious and learned man, accustomed to live with insipid tattlers, or noisy, clamorous, detracting, scolding persons, if silence in a house has no charms? Ask the man of noble and generous nature, disgusted with the eternal fault-finding of false ascetics, if silence has no affinity with goodness? Ask the man, wise and virtuous, who has heard sophists doubting, disputing, denying, questioning, sparing no one living or dead, what he thinks of silence? Ask the lover, separated from his mistress, whether silence be

* Serm. 3, ad Frat. in eremo.

† Constitutio Erem. S. Romualdi Ord. Camald. c. 6.

agreeable to him? Ask all these whether they can consent to revise the silence of monks and hermits, who left men of the world to converse as much as they pleased, but found for themselves, in whose bosoms were united perhaps all these characters, rest in the study of noble themes, in the passion of remembrance, and in communication with God? They will reply, perhaps, by repeating stanzas from the poem of Mathisson, beginning

“ Into the silent land,
Ah ! who shall lead us thither ? ”

In fact, in one sense it seems an invitation to such retreats as these,—

“ O land ! O land !
For all the broken-hearted,
The mildest herald by our fate allotted
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand,
To lead us with a gentle hand
Into the land of the great departed,
Into the silent land.”

All these things already glanced at being then more or less necessary to render possible and desirable a life in common, and it being clear that without the principles and even doctrines which centre in Catholicism they cannot be procured, it is but logical to conclude that a complete monastic association will never be realized excepting within that pale, by some chosen few in particular conditions, and with an especial grace from God. Some have compared the wonders of such a state with the Socialist's Utopias of our days ; but it can only be to place this fact for a moment in a point of view more forcible and adapted to the capacities of the present age ; for otherwise such an association of things essentially distinct would serve to no useful purpose.

As connected with the power of enduring retreat, stability, and silence, the extension and even position of the monasteries, is again a very remarkable and significant fact. Systematic adversaries, when such a fancy takes them, may establish in some one locality a house in which the monastic forms may be externally, to a certain extent, and for a short time, imitated ; but let them try to introduce and permanently establish throughout, not Europe, but only their own privileged domains, such institutions, and their discomfiture will be complete. The existence of monasteries, taking into account their essential character and that of the persons who inhabited them in such vast numbers over the world, can hardly be reconciled with a belief in the falsehood of the principles from which they emanated. Antonio de Escobar says, that more than 30,000 abbeys and 17,000

priorities follow the rule of St. Benedict ; but Yepes says, that the Benedictine order counted 47,000 abbeys and 14,000 priorities*. “We reckon,” says a Franciscan author, “more than 1600 convents of our order, besides others now building in different places†.” In Oxirinthus, besides the monasteries, there were monks dwelling under the gates and in the towers of the city, “so that,” says an ancient writer, “the bishop could preach as well in the streets as in a church‡.” In the seventh century, through all the provinces of Gaul, houses of monks and nuns were established, not alone in towns and villas, villages and castles, but also throughout vast desert regions. In Vienne, in Dauphiny, were no less than sixty monasteries of the Benedictine order of men and women, as Surius relates. In the year 1436, under the episcopacy of Frederick III., bishop of Constance, the number of monasteries in that diocese alone amounted to 350, which, even after the pseudo-reform, was increased by the introduction of Capuchins, Carmelites, and barefooted Franciscans ; and instead of ten or twelve monks living together, thirty, and even as many as seventy monks would thus be found in one house§. The greater monasteries every where had no want of inhabitants. In St. Peter's de Cardenna were at one time 200 monks, all of whom became martyrs ; in St. Peter's of Arlanza were 240. In the monasteries of Sahagun, of St. Æmilian, of Onnensis, Cellanova, and Alcobacensis, the numbers were far greater. At Clairvaux, in the time of St. Bernard, were 700 ; at Pobletensis, in Catalonia, were 500 ; in Jumièges were 900, beside 1500 servants who almost led a religious life||. Trithemius said that the monastic society formed a considerable part of Christendom¶. Louis XII. used to say jestingly, that St. Maur had acquired more with his breviary than he and his predecessors with their swords. If these numbers, by the way, should offend you by their magnitude, might it not be well to seek to recover your tranquillity by looking at the modern statistical tables, which give the numbers of persons at the present day in asylums of an unquestionably unhappy kind, as unions, madhouses, prisons, and penitentiaries, the need of which, in former times, comparatively can hardly be said to have existed, and that not, as some suppose, from indifference or the universal practice of putting every one criminal to death, but from the preventatives which existed

* Yepes, Chron. Gen. tom. ii. 143.

† Bucehnius, Lib. Conformit. 164.

‡ Ex Vitis S. Patrum.

§ Gab. Bucehnius, Constantia Rhenana, 27.

|| Yepes, tom. i. 143.

¶ Lib. i. de Vir. Illust. c. 2.

against both moral and physical evil? It would seem that by a law of humanity retreat of some kind must be the lot of multitudes. Is it not better that it should be voluntary and happy, than compulsive and miserable?

But not alone the number, the very position of monasteries in places far from the attractions that generally cause men to congregate, must be considered as significant. Cicero says of a certain locality, "*Et locus est ipse non tam ad inflammandos calamitosorum animos quam ad consolandos accommodatus* *." The question now is, how came such multitudes to prefer localities that had only the latter advantage to offer? Here, in order to make some observations, let us repair to the deserts, amidst woods and mountains, where monasteries were often found. If the existence itself, under any circumstances, of these institutions require a combination of principles which have their centre in Catholicism, we shall find that their existence in such places as these, in which most of them took at least their origin, constitutes a fact not wholly insignificant of the truth from which they emanate.

It is a wild path in general which men have to tread when they set out for the ancient monastery. It is an occasion for exclaiming with Brunetto, in his *Tesoretto*,

"Well away! what fearful ground
In that savage part I found.
Not a road was there in sight,
Not a house, and not a wight,
Not a bird, and not a brute,
Not a bush, and not a root,
Not an emmet, not a fly,
Not a thing I mote desery."

Sometimes we shall have to ascend the summit of lofty mountains to unfrequented deserts, where the snow dwells, to which men can be guided by the eagle; that bird which resembles in its haunts some of these religious men; for, as Pliny says, describing it, "*conversatur in montibus*." Here, as we before observed, the dark pine-woods present too an analogy in their tastes; for, as the same observer remarks, "*Picea montes amat atque frigora* †." If we go back to very early ages we shall have to pass over to barren islands within which monks were dwelling, as appears from the monasteries found in Capraria, Gorgonia, and Palmaria in the year 398, as also from those of Lerins in Gaul, in the island of St. Simon, which is opposite Redondela in Galicia, and from those of Diomedes and of Trimeti near Mount Gargano ‡.

* Pro P. Sulla.

† N. H. xv. 18.

‡ Yepes, Chron. Gen. ii. 6, 7.

At other times it is through the shady peace of sombre forests that we have to pursue our way, appalled by the solitude, and only seeing light break dimly through sylvan cloisters far in the distance, till emerging from the gloom we find the venerable pile standing alone in the wilderness, with lawny mountains sloping round about it, their summits clothed with woods of fir eye dropping their hard fruit upon the ground, and in their ravines vast caves inviting the curiosity of all who pass. The name even is sometimes derived from one of these green-robed senators of mighty woods found in the vicinity. Thus, three leagues south-west from Morimond, in a beautiful valley, watered by a rivulet which falls into the Meuse, was the monastery of Belfays, called from an immense beech that stood there, *Bellus Fagus*. The scenery around monasteries is sometimes fearfully austere. "The Augustinian monastery of Seefeld, in Bavaria, stands," says Crusenius, "on a mountain, shaggy with rocks and ancient woods, where ice and snow seem to be perpetual; a place by nature adapted to penance and to the eremitical life." In fact, no one who has seen that mountain can ever forget its form or the wild desolation that reigns around. "There," adds this author, "we are truly monks, true solitary hermits of St. Augustin, excepting that during the short summer many strangers come there to fulfil their vows and ask benefits*." The abbey of Stavelo stands in a valley which, at the time of its erection, was a profound solitude, Spa, which is only three miles distant from it, not being then in existence. The monks over whom St. Stephen had presided, after his death being calumniated by some in their neighbourhood who envied their celebrity, and persecuted by the rustics whom these men had instigated against them, removed from Muret to Grandmont. It was in 1132 when the Lord Amelius de Montecucullus gave them the whole wood on the mountain of Grandmont, and Henry II., king of England, money to build their convent. This is in the mountainous region of Limoges, austere, cold, barren, and rocky, exposed to clouds and storms, of which the water is too cold to be drunk with safety. Here, between four mountains, stood the monastery, magnificently built, where later rose the small town of Grandmont†. When the abbey of Pontigny was built in 1114, it stood amidst vast, unbounded, sterile lands or commons, and primeval forests. The chief flocks were swine. Here and there the granges of the abbey formed central spots, which subsequently gave rise to villages and towns‡. Rievaulx, when the abbey was founded there, was, to use the

* *Monast. Augustinianum*, p. iii. 46.

† Levesque, *Annales Ord. Grandimontis*, I.

‡ Chaillon des Barres, *l'Abbaye de Pontigny*, 126.

words of William of Newbury, "locus horrois et vastæ solitudinis *." Such, too, was the site of Ely, Croyland, and of most others.

"Some time after passing Bembibre," says a traveller in Spain, "half-way up the mountain over whose foot we were wending, jutted forth a black, frightful crag, which at an immense altitude overhung the road, and seemed to threaten destruction. It resembled one of those ledges of the rocky mountains in the picture of the Deluge, up to which the terrified fugitives have scrambled. Built on the very edge of this crag stood an edifice, seemingly devoted to the purposes of religion, as I could discern the spire of a church rearing itself high over wall and roof. 'That is the house of the Virgin of the Rocks,' said the peasant, 'and it was lately full of friars; but they have been thrust out, and the only inmates now are owls and ravens.'" It was in 1122 that the forest of La Trappe beheld the foundation of a monastery by Rotrou II., count of Perche. This solitude, from time immemorial, bore the name of Trap, to signify that it was difficult to discover the way out when once within its labyrinth. Even at this day, when roads have been cut, it is nearly impossible to find the monastery without a guide. "Lately," says a monk of the house, "a travelling merchant, surprised by night, lost his way, and was only directed by the sound of the bell for matins, which he followed till he arrived at the monastery at midnight, where he was so moved by what he saw, that he never left it more, but took the habit, and died as one of the elect. An Italian nobleman similarly lost all track in the woods, and could not even learn from the peasants whom he met which was the way to the monastery. A few years ago a Belgian, in like manner, after travelling from an early hour, while endeavouring to visit the monastery, found himself at noon in the very spot where he had first entered the forest, and was obliged to renounce his intention of seeing La Trappe †." In general the names bespeak the original nature of the site. If the monks came to a dense, obscure forest, they formed clear spaces within it, and the spot was called thenceforth Clairieu, Vauclair, or Vauluisant. A thorny thicket near Bourbonnelles-bains became Vaux-la-douce; dangerous defiles and cut-throat gorges amidst rocks were then called La Charité, Vau-sainte, Grace-Dieu. Morimond had a grange which was formerly called Wildhausen, wild house in the woods ‡. The charter of Romarie, count of Avendo, to the monastery of Romarie, on the mountains of the Vosges, contains these words,

* Rer. Ang. lib. i.

† Hist. des Trappistes du Val Ste. Marie.

‡ Dubois, Hist. de l'Abbaye de Morimond, 258.

"I have assigned a place on the mountain of Rombeck near my castle, in a wood not far from the Moselle river, 'ut ubi prius lupi tantum ac ursæ audiebantur, psalmos sancti angeli, hymnos, et cantica spiritualia audirent cum perpetua gratiarum actione conjuncta*.'" St. William, an Augustinian, is represented in an old picture reading in a wood, with bears and wolves near him, and a suit of armour lying on the ground. The inscription under it is as follows :—

"Quis docuit solum te visere lustra ferarum ?
Vis te mente ferox assimilare feris ?
Absit ab hoc animus ; tenero quia mitior agno
In sylvo recubas à feritate procul.
Dive nimis felix ! hæc est mutatio dextræ
Exceelsi, dextrè qui sua quæque movet.
Olim qui Proceres fidei ferus oppugnasti
Nunc tecum pugnās ; vince ; triumphus erit †."

In fact, wolves and bears were often the nearest neighbours of the monks. The Cartulaire of the monastery of Zwelt, in Lower Austria, commenced in 1273 by the Abbot Ebron, and continued by his successors, was known on account of its binding by the title of *La Peau d'Ours*‡. Peter the Venerable, writing to Guigo, prior of the Chartreuse, begs him to send the volume of St. Augustin that contains his letters to St. Jerome, because a great part of their own copy, while lying at one of their cells, had been eaten by a bear—"casu comedit ursus§." Delméc, the curate of Haulchin, on visiting the abbey of Westmalle, similarly had proof, without looking out of the windows, of the wildness of the locality, though in a different form, for he found in his soup a piece of a fir-tree.

"Far from towns," says Vincent of Lerins, "in the secret retirement of a monastery, we live where we can fulfil what is sung in the Psalm, 'Vacate et videte quoniam ego sum Dominus||.'" On the summit of Cape Saint-Mathieu, in Lower Brittany, considered one of the most wild and melancholy spots in France, stood the abbey of which only ruins now remain. When storms came on, these monks used to be seen coming forth, chanting sacred hymns, processionally to bless the sea and to implore from Heaven mercy for those navigating; after which, in silence they would regain their cloister. One only used to remain bareheaded, exposed to the storm as long as it lasted, and when he saw any vessel exposed to danger he knelt down

* Yepes, Chron. Gen. ii. 79.

† Crusenius, pars ii. c. 21.

‡ Bib. de l'École des Chartes, iii. 289.

§ Lib. i. Ep. xxiv. Bib. Clun. 653.

|| Commonit.

and prayed. In general, the monasteries which are now in the vicinity of towns, with good roads leading to them, were formerly in desert places, and almost inaccessible. Pius II., on visiting the two abbeys of Subiaco, speaks of the difficulty of the zigzag path to them, over the rocks, amidst precipices which inspire horror*."

St. John Climacus mentions an abbey named Sydey, which was at a distance of sixty miles from any town or village. It was a privilege of Grandmont that the monks could toll their bells during an interdict, as the sound was beyond reach of the ears of men †. When such absolute seclusion did not exist, the monastery stood either in a town, which was itself so hid away in woods as to explain why Cervantes's duchess could say in her letter to Sancho's wife, "I am told that the acorns of your town are very large," or else it was situated in the distant retired suburbs, or without the gates of some great city. St. Jerome himself, it is true, a great lover of the desert, was so impressed with a sense of the advantages of such a position, that, speaking of St. Paul, he says he must have sought a lodging in Rome in some street, "*ab omni importunitate vacua—nec proxima spectaculorum joci nec turpi vicinia detestabilis.*" In fact, solitude and seclusion could be found in the metropolis of the empire itself. "There was a monk," we read, "who dwelt in a little cell outside of the walls of Constantinople. The Emperor Theodosius, hearing that there was such a hermit who never left his cell, walked one day to the place, and charged his attendants not to approach the spot. So he knocked at the door, and the hermit opened to him, and after prayer they both sat down, and the emperor asked him respecting the hermits in Egypt; and looking on all sides he saw nothing but a few dry loaves in a basket hanging, and he asked him to bless and give him food; and the hermit brought water and salt, and they ate together. 'Do you know me?' asked the emperor. 'No,' replied the hermit. 'I am Theodosius.' Then the hermit prostrated himself, and the emperor said, 'Oh, how happy are you! I, who reign, cannot take food without solicitude.'" Down to the sixteenth century, and even to the French Revolution, there were persons inhabiting such cities as London and Paris, and yet living in as peaceful a retreat as if they were in the deserts of Palestine. The London Carthusians had their cells and gardens in the city; and the convent of the Carmelites in the Faubourg St. Jacques at Paris appeared, as the Marchioness de Portes said, "like a great desert, in which grace spoke incessantly to the heart. I say what I have felt," she adds; "this place seemed to me a profound soli-

* Comment. ann. 1614.

† Levesque, Annales G. 1.

tude reserved for heavenly minds, separated from all the vanities of earth."

This allusion to the anachorite and the desert serves as a fitting prelude to another observation respecting the localities chosen by religious men; for besides the greater monasteries built, as we have seen, amidst woods and mountains, there are also hermitages presenting the same phenomenon of habitations in solitude; and if the forest presents an analogy to the desires which partly led to the creation of the former, since the height and strength of the pine depend on the closeness with which they grow together, which proximity prevents them from spreading out their branches to their own detriment, it no less has points of resemblance to the genius of the latter; for in the case of most timber, the finest trees, both for size and quality, are not in the most accessible situations, but on rocks and mountains to which approach is difficult. Marina d'Escobar describes a vision, in which she was reminded of the life of hermits and solitary monks on the mountains. "The Divine Majesty seemed," she says, "to lead me to a certain castle, whence I beheld some lofty mountains, most beautiful and lovely, which produced inestimable gems; for they were planted, as it were, with little shrubs of gold, and covered with precious stones. The mountains shone splendidly, and men most wise and holy seemed to inhabit them, waited on by angels; and when I asked who were these few holy, happy men, I was told, 'These are the holy anachorites, who in the world turn from its vanities to the desert, and resolve to lead a solitary life, that they may more freely enjoy the divine love, mortifying their bodies with a rude asperity of life. Does not this vision comfort and delight you?' Then I felt exhilarated and refreshed *." Poets themselves seem to invoke such images, as where Fletcher says,—

"Nor want, the curse of man, shall make me groan,
A holy hermit is a mind alone."

St. Ephrem refers men to this life of hermits in a remarkable passage. "Consider," he says, "the lives of the fathers who dwell in the desert, in the midst of a vast solitude. Let us repair to them, though the way may inspire terror, for we shall derive immense assistance from beholding and hearing them. They have left cities, with their tumults, desiring to live on mountains in solitude; in the midst of the rocks are their delights; their table is the green grass, and their head's rest a stone; a cavern is their house; their only walls are the rocks and mountains around them; their viands are the wild roots and herbs, and their drink the torrent. They wander through the

haunts of wild beasts as if wild themselves, and with the birds, whose song is their matin bell, they perch from rock to rock. If a robber sees them, he falls down and adores, since they always wear a cross on their habit. If cruel animals come up, they turn aside dismayed. A light surrounds them wherever they stray, and their dwelling is made in peace. Kings find their palaces too confined, but the caverns of the desert are lofty and wide, and here is tranquillity which crowns cannot bestow. The pleasures of Paradise surround them, and when tired wandering over the mountains they lie down on the earth, and find a sweet repose ; for angels watch over their lying down, and over their rising, and guard them ever. Their dwelling is not magnificent. Where the sun sets, there they sleep ; where the sun rises, there they remain. They have no cares for providing a tomb, for to the world they are dead in the love and desire of Christ ; but where sometimes they accomplish a fast, there they erect a monument. Many of them, while intently praying, depart in peace ; others, supported by rocks, deliver up their souls ; others die while simply straying on the mountains ; others sleep in the Lord while partaking of herbs upon the ground ; others are taken away abruptly while employed in the divine praises ; others while reciting psalms upon the mountain passes*." This singular mode of life was chiefly confined to the early ages of Christianity, though it has left some traces even at the present day. On all the great chains of mountains that traverse Spain, and especially on the northern coast, almost every town and hamlet has its hermitage in some adjoining wood or cave. Thus, Villa-Real, in the Basque mountains, has three hermitages ; Mondragon and Salinas, in the province of Alava, have the same number ; Guetaria and Ondarra, on the coast, have each four hermitages ; Lequetio has eight, Bermeo nine, Placencia two, Portugalette three, Elorrio seventeen, Durango nine hermits ; Barcena has one hermit. Then, in Navarre, Tafalla has four hermits, Olite six, Valtierra, near the Ebro, four ; Lumbier, near Pampeluna, six ; Sanguessa three, but Estella has only one hermit ; Logrono has two hermits, Salvatierra eight, Guadalaxara the same number. Villa-Franca de Panades has its hermitage of St. Laurence, Cordova its hermitage in the Sierra Morena of our Lady, La Fuen Santa, of the Holy Fountain, to which you ascend through delicious gardens.

Some of these solitudes are associated with memorable events in Spanish history. "A certain good knight of Saragossa, named Votus," says Marineus Siculus, "hunting one day on the Pyrenean mountains, and cutting his way through the wood with his sword in pursuit of an animal, came to a little ruined

* In SS. Patres tunc defunctos.

chapel under a rock, on entering which he found an altar with these words inscribed on it : ‘ Ego Joannes hujus adiculae conditor et primus habitator, velut in heremo Deo servire cupiens, hanc ecclesiolam parvumque sacellum exegi, sanctoque, Joanni Baptistæ consecravi. In qua vixi diutius, et nunc mortuus in Domino requiesco.’ This John was one of the Christians who had fled from the Moors in 714. The knight wept on reading this inscription, and returning to Saragossa, sold all his goods, and gave the price to the poor. His brother Felix followed his example, and both of them then repaired to this little hermitage hid away in the woods, where they lived most holily ; and it was by their advice that, in 730, the Christians chose Garsias Ximenes for their captain-general against the Moors*.” But these habitations, as every one knows, were not confined to Spain ; they existed in every country. At present it is only the spot itself, the material scene, which we have to observe, pursuing thus our solitary way.

This beautiful world is not without visible traces of the life—

ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι †—

familiar to the reader of Homer, and of all the earliest bards—life poetical ascribed to men in the Golden Age, when, as we read,

“ ——— domus antra fuerunt,

Et densi frutices, et junctæ cortice virgæ ‡.”

Here are grottoes, like the cave of Philoctetes, opening both to the rising and the setting sun, with their fountain near *κενήν οἰκήσιν ἀνθρώπων εἶχα*, with a heap of leaves for bed, and a wooden cup for furniture §. Here is the entrance of a human habitation,

“ ——— sub rupe cavata,

Arboribus clausam circum, atque horrentibus umbris ||.”

It is what our fathers formerly so loved,—

“ A hermitage,

Sculptured from out the chasm—one huge block

In which the hermit dwelt—a pensive home.”

Oh, how the wanderer through such wilds would gaze, saying to himself,

“ ——— Within that cave I deem

Whereon so fixedly I hold my ken

There is a spirit dwells,—one of my blood !”

He might gaze from without, but, say the constitutions of the

* Mar. Sic., De Reb. Hispan. lib. viii.

† Od. i. 15.

§ Philoctet.

‡ Ov. Met. i.

|| Æn. i. 310.

hermits of St. Romuald of Camaldoli, "for greater solitude no one must enter or even put his head into the cell of a hermit, unless in the event of fire, or sickness, or urgent necessity *." If the imaginary personage of the poet could say,

"Sunt mihi, pars montis, vivo pendentia saxo
Antra, quibus nec sol medio sentitur in æstu
Nec sentitur hyems †,"

the real inhabitant of such places can now be heard, saying,

"—— Hail, thou fair heaven !
We house i' the rock, yet use thee not so hardly
As prouder livers do."

"Mollis ut seeli fugias pericla,
Horridæ cætus petis antra sylvæ,
Quo Deus secum vocat ad beatæ
Otia vite.

"Pervigil seras ibi noctis horas
Transigis multa prece, nec diurnam
Sol ubi lucem retulit, precandi
Deficit ardor.

"Fallacis metuens gaudia seculi,
Quæ blandis animos illecebris trahunt,
Sylvarum latebras, notaque belluis,
Prudens, antra subiveras ‡."

St. Ephraim of Odessa lived on the banks of a small rivulet, by the sides of which rugged rocks, nearly 100 feet high, reared their heads. In the highest of these he hewed out a cell, with two windows in opposite directions, which gave him a clear view up and down the stream. The entrance was by a narrow and intricate path, which could scarcely be recognized, save by himself alone. Between the two disjointed chasms of this huge rock there was a thin coating of soil, which he converted into a garden, for the rearing of such herbs as his fare required. St. John of Egypt lived forty-seven years in his hermitage on the banks of the Nile, during which time he had never seen a piece of money. The hermitage of St. Macaire of Alexandria was studded all round with flowers and shrubs of various kinds, forming a spot so beautiful that many persons came from a distance to admire it. It was in a similar solitude that St. Arsenus lived fifty-five years, after spending twenty at the court. It is to such spots that the poet supposes himself hastening, where he begins in the well-known lines,—

* Constit. Er. c. 1.

† Ov. Met. xiii.

‡ Arevalus, Hymnodia Hispanica D. S. Prudentii.

“Turn, gentle hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way
To where yon taper cheers the vale
With hospitable ray.”

Some whole districts were selected in an early age as favourable to this kind of life. Thus, the secluded parts of El Vierzo in Leon, shut out from the world, attracted the recluses of the seventh century, so that the place became a Thébais, and rivalled the holiest sites of Palestine in the number of its sanctuaries and saints, of whom the earliest was San Fructuoso, the son of the count or petty sovereign of El Vierzo, who gave up his flocks and goods, and lived a hermit, passing from one cave to another as the crowds of disciples pressed upon him. It was he who founded the chief monasteries of the country, such as San Martín de Castañeda, Santiago de Peñalba, Carracedo el Real, and Compludo. Near the monastery of Peñalba are the mountain caves hanging over the Río de Silencio. These five caves are called Las Cuevas de Silencio, and in these the monks used to pass their Lent. A wild-goat path leads up to this retreat. The convent was completed in 937. San Fructuoso's next retreat from the Caves of Silence was to San Pedro de Montes, which lies about one league and a half west, under the desolate hills of Aquilanas, the eagle's haunt. But of all hermitages, perhaps none were more justly celebrated than those of Montserrat in Catalonia. “It is a favour from Heaven,” says their historian, “to have rendered this mountain so proper for the eremitical life, where hermits, like sentinels, are continually employed in warding off the wiles of demons against men. Each of these hermitages has some peculiar feature to inspire meditation. Thus, one is remarkable for its steep rocks and gulphs, another for the narrowness of the spot itself, and the unbounded view which it commands.”

There are thirteen hermitages on Montserrat; on the highest point is that of St. Jerome, much exposed to cold winds, but nevertheless at present inhabited. It is one league from the monastery, and two from the foot of the mountain. Half a league below, descending towards the south, is the hermitage of St. Magdalen, placed between steep rocks almost inaccessible, the ascent to it being by precipitous steps cut in the rock. From the windows of this hermitage the abbey is seen below beneath a frightful precipice. A little lower towards the south is the hermitage of St. Onuphrius, in the hollow of a rock half-way up a precipice, fifty toises from the foot of the rock, so that seen from below it seems suspended in the air; the entrance is by a wooden bridge, resting on the rock, over a precipice which inspires horror. This is the smallest of the hermitages, but it is well built, and the residence is healthy. Further towards the

south, on the same rock, is that of St. John, the most agreeable of all on the mountain. The entrance is easy, and the view most beautiful; there are gardens and walks contrived along the rock, and bordered with precipices on all sides. From here one sees lower down towards the south the hermitage of St. Catherine at the foot of a great rock. It is the farthest and the least visited, being out of the great road of the hermitages, but it is a delightful residence. Turning towards the north, one sees on the summit of a high rock the hermitage of St. James. The approach is very difficult, and the high winds, which reign there almost continually, render it an inconvenient residence; but it has its pleasures, and the view is lovely. Descending from the hermitage of St. Jerome towards the north, after walking a quarter of a league by a rough and difficult path, one comes to the hermitage of St. Anthony, built nearly on the summit of a vast rock. It has a little garden terminated by a precipice, which makes giddy those who look down. The view is delightful. Thence to the monastery there are three-quarters of a league, so that its solitude is less interrupted. Walking then along a high hill for more than a quarter of a league among many steep rocks, one comes to the hermitage of the holy Saviour. Its chapel is scooped out of a rock so high that its point seems to touch the clouds. Its vault appears like jasper. A little lower towards the south is the hermitage of St. Benedict, with a beautiful garden and delightful walks. Thence, descending to the valley, one comes to the hermitage of St. Anne, which is in the centre of all the hermitages. Its chapel is larger than the others, with a little choir, where all the hermits assemble on Sundays and festivals to hear mass, and the sermon by the father vicar. Thence, turning to the north, one mounts to the hermitage of the Holy Trinity at the foot of the rocks. It has beautiful alleys of trees, with delightful walks. Lower down towards the east, adjoining the rocks, is the hermitage of the Holy Cross, built on the steps by which one mounts from the monastery to the hermitages. This way is composed of 600 steps cut in the rock, and in some places quite through it in form of a tunnel. Near these stairs, to the east, is the hermitage of St. Dymas, or of the Good Thief, on the summit of a precipitous rock steep on all sides. Here are the ruins of an old castle, which could only be entered by a drawbridge, which, being raised up, the place was impregnable. Formerly thirty robbers took possession of it, and thence made predatory expeditions, ravaging the whole country, casting great stones down upon the monastery, and so obliging the monks to satisfy their demands. The place being taken by surprise during their absence and razed to the ground by the abbot, the present hermitage was built on the spot, under the title of the Good Thief.

In each hermitage there is a kitchen, a refectory, and one or two chambers. The little birds on Montserrat are so tame that they come to feed out of the hermits' hands; they perch on their crows, and when their young ones are afraid to approach, the parent birds peck at them to make them advance*. These hermits rise at two in the morning, say their office and pray till five, and spend the rest of the day working and reading. They carve wood; and some of their little works, when given to princes and kings, are esteemed by them as more valuable than precious stones.

But we must no longer remain on the sacred mountain of Catalonia; other hermitages invite us forwards. Those heights of *Ætna*, where during the world's blindness satyrs danced and Cyclops dwelt in caves†, were now inhabited by the hermit, who might say with Menalcas: "*Ætna is a mother to me, and I dwell in a beautiful cave in the hollow rock‡.*" The "*Ætnean brothers*" of Virgil were now hermits; in fact, few mountains or woods in any part of Christendom were left without some hermitage. St. Stephen, about to embrace the eremitical life after the examples he had seen, came first from Calabria, in the year 1076, to a woody mountain of Aquitaine called Muret, not far from the city of Limoges, where he found rocks and fountains, a desert, pathless land covered with wood, dreary all the year round, where no men, but only wild beasts, lived. Here he made a hut of boughs. For the first year he was alone, but in the second year he was joined by two disciples. Then others came; and so by degrees a community of hermits was formed, who lived here like those of Egypt§.

These are curious details. It is difficult, perhaps, for any one wholly to resist the kind of charm which is attached to the descriptions of the ancient hermitage, as in the lines—

"Farre in the forrest, by a hollow glade
Covered with mossie shrubs, which spreading brode,
Did underneath them make a gloomy shade,
Where foot of living creature never trode,
Ne scarse wyld beasts durst come, there was this wight's abode."

These beasts, however, did approach, and even fawn upon the hermit, who used in reality to express the sentiment which the poet ascribes to him, saying,

"Taught by the Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them."

* Dom Louis Montegut, Hist. Notre Dame de Montserrat, Epitome Historico del Portentoso Sanctuario y Real Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de Monserrate.

† Eurip. Cyclops.

‡ Theocrit.

§ Levesque Annales Ord. Grandimontis, l.

The eremitical solitude, it must be confessed, is sometimes described in episodes of great beauty. "A certain young brother," says Pelagius, "asked the abbot permission to repair to the desert, and he gave him two monks of the monastery for guides, and they departed. After proceeding two days they began to find the heat insupportable, and they lay on the ground, when an eagle came near, and, flying a little before them, perched on the ground. And the monks said, 'Lo! there is your guide further on, follow him;' and, rising up, he took leave of the monks. And on the eagle flying on he followed it, and it alighted again; and when it flew on farther, he still kept up with it for three hours, while it always flew a short space, and then sat as if waiting for him. At last the eagle wheeled to the right, and he lost sight of it; but, on proceeding, he found three poplar-trees, and a fountain, and a cavern, and there he resolved to remain. So he entered the cave, and ate dates, and lived there for six years*."

Sometimes it is in small islands that the hermitage is found. Thus the monk of St. Albans speaks of an island called Koket on the coast of Northumberland, where a single monk resides as a hermit, the place being considered as a hermitage. Islands amidst inland wastes were often the site. So, describing the region of Crowland and Ely, an old historian says, "The fen begins from the river Granta, not far from the town of Grantchester. There are immense marshes, now a black pool of water, now foul-running streams, and also many islands, and reeds, and hillocks, and thickets; and with manifold windings, wide and long, it continues up to the North Sea. Here was the great wilderness into which a man named Tatwine conducted St. Guthlac, saying that he knew an island called Crowland, especially obscure, which oftentimes men had attempted to inhabit, but no one could do it on account of manifold horrors and fears, and the loneliness of the wide wilderness, so that no man could endure it, but every one on this account had fled from it†." In very ancient times monasteries themselves possessed men who aspired to lead an eremitical life, as in the deserts of Palestine. Secret chambers with little gardens were prepared for them. The Spanish monasteries had always provision in some desert near them for those who wished to lead this kind of life, as those of St. Æmilian de Coyolla, of St. Turibius of Liebana, of St. Peter de Montibus, and others‡. These solitary hermits used every Sunday to leave their cells, and come to the monastery to receive the communion, and then after the office to

* Pelagius Diaconus, de Vita S. Patrum, c. 7.

† Felix of Crowland, Life of St. Guthlac.

‡ Ant. de Yepes, Chron. Gen. i. 66.

return to their caves. This was the case at the Vosges, and at the Destercian mountain, and at St. Peter de Montibus*. Notwithstanding the austerity of such a life, we find that Catholicism contrived to render it compatible with consolation that may be termed human. Thus to the beauties of external nature were often added those of art in the decoration of the dwelling. Vasari speaks of a painting by Raphael being placed in one apartment of the hermitage of Camaldoli; and we know that many pictures were expressly painted for similar situations.

The dangers and inconveniences attending a life in such localities, whether in monasteries or in eremitical seclusion, must be taken into account in appreciating the fact of their existence. We find allusion to these perils in ancient poems, as in those of St. Paulinus, describing what the character of the place had been when religious persons came there first :

"O vices rerum ! bene versa forma !
Invii montes prius, et cruenti
Nunc tegunt versos monachis latrones
Pacis alumnos.

"Mos ubi quondam fuerat ferarum,
Nunc ibi ritus viget Angelorum ;
Et latet justus, quibus ipse latro
Vixit in antris.

"De lupis hoc est vitulos creare,
Et bovi junctum, palea leonem
Pascere, et tutis cava viperarum
Pandere parvis.

"Orbis in muta regione per te
Barbari discunt resonare Christum
Corde Romano, placidamque casti
Vivere pacem."

Great, however, as might be the transformation of places from times when a solitary man was an object to inspire fear, as when Ulysses seeing Philoctetes from afar beholds him with alarm, suspecting that he would rather seize himself than all the Greeks together, still the dangers attending such localities were not wholly obviated. Lawless men were to be feared in spots where one might think that only by a special interposition of Providence could persons or property be protected. Leo of Ostia relates an instance. "Some nobles (as he calls them) of Capua having many disputes with the abbot of Monte Cassino about a certain castle, conspired to invade the lands of the abbey, and make a descent on the monastery itself for the sake

of plunder. Towards evening, therefore, they set out, and coming to a place in the neighbourhood they rested awhile, and then set off again, choosing such an hour of the night that early in the morning they might enter the abbey lands. It was about midnight, and they rode on; when lo! a wondrous thing happened, but one most certain, for it was told me," continues Leo, "by one who rode in that company. After riding till break of day, when they thought they had reached the abbey lands, where, like other robbers, they might commence the work of pillage, they found themselves in the very place whence they had set out, and discovered that they had been riding round and round in circles. They were struck with amaze, and ascribing their error to the merits of St. Benedict, they returned to Capua, relating to every one publicly what had occurred to them*." On another occasion dangers of a similar kind were averted in a manner no less surprising. After the sack of Rome by the troops of Charles V., Philibertus, prince of Orange, with his soldiers, invaded the lands of Monte Cassino, and prepared to visit the abbey for the sake of plunder. The abbot, dreading the nature of the man, fled, and concealed the most precious treasures in a neighbouring tower. The prior, however, Dom Urban of Cremona, a pious and magnanimous man, with the abbot's consent remained with the monks, trusting in divine aid; nor were his hopes in vain; for the prince of Orange, after ascending the mountain with the worst intentions, on entering the abbey was so struck with the dignity of the place, that he publicly avowed that his will was divinely changed. In fact, he put a stop to all attempts at pillage, and even placed guards to defend the abbey, taking the whole of its territory under his protection. It was this holy prior Urban who foretold his own death, being in the monastery of Parma; saying that his soul would depart while the monks were singing the Magnificat in the choir, which prediction was exactly fulfilled†. Plundered, however, and even murdered the holy inhabitants of the desert sometimes were, as every one acquainted with monastic history will remember. "In 1265 fifty intrepid men," says Mathew Paris, "armed with swords, bows, and arrows, entered the monastery of the blessed Gilles of the Wood, near St. Albans, and, after plundering the goods of these poor nuns, they retired laden with booty. As they drew near Dunstable a man ran behind them, crying out and sounding a horn, and saying, 'These men have pillaged the priory of the wood!' The population ran together, and, strange to say, these robbers seemed struck dumb and incapable of self-defence; not one among them could raise a hand to draw a sword or wield a

* D. Gattula, *Hist. Abb. Cass.* p. i. 150.† *Ib.* xi. 663.

bow, so heavy did the divine vengeance lie upon them*." "Let none of you dare," says an ancient monastic rule, "by his own virtue or by the human arm to defend us against the rage of rustics and their evil outrages, whom the devil often arms against us; for our sole defender is God, and the patronage of the blessed Apostles and of all the saints of God †." The old writers, in fact, remark many instances which they consider sufficient to justify this confidence. "This year," says Mathew Paris, "Robert Marmion, a fighting knight, who had chased some monks from their convent and made a fortress of their church, was killed at the head of his banditti at the gate of the monastery; and about the same time Geoffroi, count of Mandeville, who had committed similar outrages at Ramsey, was killed by an arrow before the same church ‡." He mentions another example occurring later. "This year," he says, "1243, Enguerrand de Coucy, an ancient persecutor of the churches, but chiefly of Clairvaux, perished in a strange manner. In life he had been an assiduous constructor of material things, but a dissipater in spiritual things. One day on a journey he came to a ford. The horse stumbled in the passage, and fell on his back in the water; while he, fastened by the stirrup, was dragged violently, till his sword, falling out of the scabbard, ran him through the body. Thus drowned and transfixed he closed his eyes to the temporal light, to gather, we must fear, the fruit of his ways." Other perils arose often from the geological character of the site. Monte Cassino, for instance, was peculiarly exposed to the violence of storms. On the 7th of January, in 1500, a monk saying mass at the great altar of the abbey church, and the youth who served, were both struck with lightning, which shattered the pavement close to them, but they were not injured§. In 1457, on the 5th of December, on the first Sunday of that month, while the monks were celebrating the nocturnal office about the third hour of that night, when the prior sought the benediction for the twelfth lesson of matins, suddenly a terrible earthquake shook the walls, so that the lamps were thrown here and there, and the bells sounded, and all expected death; but no one of the monastery or of the lands suffered hurt, though above 100,000 men in different places perished||. Of the inconvenience attending such wind-blown sites incidental notice occurs in the records of the same house, where we read

* Ad ann. 1265.

† Regula SS. Pauli et Step. ap. Luc. Holstein, Codex Reg. 1.

‡ Ad ann. 1143.

§ Chronic. Riccardi de S. Germ. ap. D. Gattula, Hist. Abb. Cassinens., 831.

|| Id. 837.

that brother Maurus Rainus, a monk of Monte Cassino, devoted to constant meditation, especially during the night, when he had charge of the lamps, which office he exercised many years, had often in the winter season to rise from his bed three or four times when the force of the wind had extinguished the lights *. In the Benedictine monastery at the foot of Mount Majellieus, as the brethren reposed during the night, a certain venerable monk appeared to them, and ordered them to rise and hasten to the church, for that the monastery was about to fall. The monks repaired to the church, and with the sound of bells as usual began to sing the office, when, lo! the whole monastery fell to the ground with a great crash †. When the earthquake shook Foligno, during the night when the stranger passed through the town, the convent of Franciscans above it on the side of the mountain was overthrown an hour before his arrival. The men who changed the horses told with gratitude how the friars, singing matins, being in the church which withstood the shock, had just been preserved.

The visitors of monasteries are heard frequently to complain of the dangers and inconveniences of their position. Thus Servatus de Lairuelz, speaking of the abbey called Bellus Portus, in Brittany, says that it is surrounded with mountains, woods, and marshes, which in the winter of 1587, when he went to make his visitation, caused him much suffering; and of the monastery of All Saints, in the Black Forest, he says that it stood in a spot of such horror and solitude, and in so profound a gorge, that it was hardly safe for the religious to dwell there ‡. The choice, then, of such localities, exposed thus occasionally to dangers of different kinds, and at all times so void of the ordinary attractions which determine men in fixing their residence, may be regarded as significant. For it appears certain that abstraction made of all the sentiments wants tastes and associations arising out of those central truths which constitute a restoration of nature, there is, sooner or later, a tendency in civilized communities which causes men to fly from the solitude of the woods and mountains, not so much from wisely, perhaps, thinking with Johnson that there is no scene equal to the high tide of human existence in the heart of a populous city, or with Hazlitt that in general all people brought up in remote country places, where life is crude and harsh, are discontented and disagreeable, as through their inability to appreciate nature, and to remain alone with it, deprived of the resources which a crowd affords. The woods and mountains will then be shunned even for some fancied medical reasons, though, more salubrious

* Hist. Cassinens. xiii. 855.

† Gattula, iv. 94.

‡ Index Cænob. Ord. Premonst.

than Crotona, the old Romans might have selected them as being conducive to health and strength for the residence of their gladiators, since to such a cruel purpose did the salubrity of a place serve them, as Strabo incidentally informs us*. Let their picturesque scenery be ever so striking, these monastic sites will then be abandoned as fit only for the bilberry which grows in the bare desert, upon heaths and wild places, a hardy plant, not an unsuitable emblem, by the way, of the monk or hermit, who in choosing his locality seems to have the same predilections. In vain did Charles V. declare himself pleased with the mountain and the forest, replying to charges of their insalubrity with the proverb, "The lion is not so fierce as he is painted." The mayordomo and the secretary declared that the damp of St. Yuste would drive any one away from it. In spite of the glass and the shutters, the emperor would be disturbed during the night; and the queen of Hungary wrote to entreat him to think twice before he settled in a spot so unhealthy, though it was acknowledged afterwards to be eminently salubrious. The monks can enjoy nature in their silent convent, because, as Johnson remarks of those of St. Anthony, "whatever is done by them is incited by an adequate and reasonable motive. Labour is not omitted, devotion prepares them for another state, and reminds them of its approach; their time is regularly distributed, and one duty succeeds another, so that they are not left open to the distraction of unguided choice, nor lost in the shades of restless inactivity." But place a man that has nothing to do but to enjoy himself in the most lovely solitude, and you will see another *Rasselas* discontented in the happy valley. Place mere landed proprietors in such places as those where we find the monks dwelling—in some forlorn and naked hermitage, remote from all the pleasures of the world, and leave them without the excitement of hunting, or political and county business, or the turmoil about serious trifles, and you will find that unless some eccentricity of character induces them to lead a lonely life in some spot where men "can be stupid as a matter of course, sullen as a matter of right, and as ridiculous as they choose without being laughed at," they will not long repeat, with much enthusiasm, the lines of the poet,—

"Illa placet tellus, in qua res parva beatum
 Me facit, et tenues luxuriantur opes."

They will return to the town, threaten to hamstring their horses, like Jolly in the old play, rather than be betrayed to another journey into the country; they will turn acres of land

* Lib. v. vi.

into trunks of apparel, which can be done without going to a conjurer ; thank God they will no more be country gentlemen, unless Paris can be persuaded to stand in the country, say that so far as Longchamps, or so they may venture upon where the filly-foals come kicking in, with their manes and tails tied up in ribbons ; and that if country gentlemen be their greatest acquaintances, it is only in the capital they are good company, where to be seen with them is a kind of credit. They will grow weary, and it is quite natural that they should, even of palaces and castles, if they are not in a thick neighbourhood. What then would be to them a monastery in the wilderness ? You may answer the question by citing the complaints of Charles V.'s knights and attendants on arriving at St. Yuste, whose discontent bordered on mutiny. "The chosen paradise of the master was regarded by them as a sort of hell upon earth." After residing there some time, even the faithful Don Quixada, writing to Vazquez, says, "This is a very lonely and doleful existence ; and if his majesty came here in search of solitude, by my faith he has found it ! This is the most solitary and wretched life I have ever known, and quite insupportable to those who are not content to leave the world, which I, for one, am not content to do*." So the friar Antonio de Guevara, in his usual mirthful style, writing to the Seigneur Rodrigo Marcion, rallies him on his regret at being confined to a monastery, by order of the judge, for not having punished a traitor, and says, "Certes I am pleased at seeing you retired to the church in which you are, in which you will assist at masses which you had ceased to hear willingly. In that church you will enjoy other liberties ; for the sergeants will not take away your arms, nor will you have to rush through the town after the evening bell has sounded. You can, if you please, mount the towers and see how the great bells for festivals are rung ; and you will be able, without chaplains, to hear the benediction on Saturday evenings, to share in the offerings on Sunday, and to help in the procession of Monday for the departed ; so that you will not want the living to converse with, nor the dead for whom you can pray†." "Quiet to quick bosoms is a hell," says the poet. Founders of sects, and systems, sophists, bards, statesmen, votaries of pleasure in excess, all unquiet things need another element. Their breath is agitation and their life a storm, whereon they ride often to sink at last. Even the poetic lover of nature, if unacquainted with wants and resources arising originally out of Catholicism, will not prove to the end constant in his affection for such places. "By the lovers of virtue and of wit it will be solicitously asked," says Johnson, "if Cowley,

* Stirling, *Cloister Life of Charles V.*

† *Lettres Dorées*, liv. ii.

having at last gained his country retreat at Chertsey, was happy. Let them peruse one of his letters accidentally preserved, which I recommend to the consideration of all that may hereafter pant for solitude." But there would be no end of instances. "That virginal balsamic air of mountains," says a great French author, "which ought to reanimate my force, rarefy my blood, uncloud my fatigued brain, give me an insatiable appetite and repose without dreams, does not produce any of these effects on me. I am as well in Paris as on the Alps."

The fact is, that many of the places in which originally monasteries were built—amidst those wilds which inspire terror, and those caves which seem unfathomable, and those mountains so varied and so sublime—all that rugged majesty of rocks and toppling trees that twine their roots with stone in perpendicular places, where the foot of man would tremble could he reach them—had for their first and sole inhabitants, their first and sole admirers, the monks and hermits. It was the freeman of a monastic rule who first preferred the desert, saying with St. Bruno,

"—— mihi mens est urbana relinquere tecta,
Et petere in cultos aditus, taciturnaque saxa;
O salve semper regio tutissima mundi,
O salve quesita diu; tu saxea moles,
O salve superum mons impinguatus amore,
Salvete O tacitæ sylvæ, tenuesque myricæ;
Sumite nos hilari vestra in consortia vultu,
Venimus huc victuri omnes, simul et morituri *."

To the monks the retreat of the abbey, hid away in forests and mountains, was not alone deemed advantageous, but delightful. Conrad IX., abbot of Villars, son of the count of Seynens, afterwards successively abbot of Cîteaux in 1209, cardinal legate of Bologna, and offered the popedom, when dying said, "Utinam usque in hanc horam in Villari sub disciplina vixissem regulari, et cum culinæ hebdomadariis ibidem scutellas abluissem †." Gennadius describes his own coming to the desert in these words, inscribed on tablets, which are preserved as a great treasure in the monastery of St. Peter de Montibus: "When I was under the obedience of my father abbot Arandiselus, in the monastery of Argeus, the solitary life greatly delighted me. Therefore, receiving a benediction, with twelve monks I proceeded to the desert of St. Peter de Montibus, where the first founder and possessor was St. Fructuosus. That place from time immemorial lay waste, covered with thorns and brushwood.

* Vicentinus Carthus, de Origine S. Carthus. Ordinis.

† Aubertus Miræus, Chronic. Cisterciensis, 124.

Vast trees also had grown up so as to conceal every thing. Then, with the Lord's assistance, I and my twelve brethren rebuilt this monastery, planted a vineyard, sowed trees, cultivated the ground, and did all that was necessary *." St. Bruno evinces a true taste for the pleasures resulting from the scenery of the desert. Writing to Radulphus, archbishop of Reims, he describes his own monastery in these terms: "In the borders of Calabria, with religious brethren, and some very learned men, who persevering in divine watches expect the return of their Lord, that when He knocketh they may immediately open to Him, I dwell in a hermitage sufficiently remote from all habitation of men; of the beauty of which, the mildness of the air, the grateful plain stretching far amongst mountains, where are green meadows and flowery pastures, how can I worthily speak? Who can sufficiently describe the gentle swelling of the hills yielding such prospects over the depths of shaded valleys, with the lovely refreshment of the rivers, streams, and fountains? Nor are wanting watered gardens, and the fertility of divers trees. But why dwell on these? for there are other delights of a prudent man, more grateful and useful, because divine; though the infirm mind, fatigued by stricter discipline and spiritual studies, is often upraised and made to breathe again by these things. For if the bow be always bent, it becomes loose and less fit for use. But what of delight and utility the solitude and silence of the hermitage yields to its lovers, those only know who have experienced†." A recent poet, expressing his delight at visiting such places, says accordingly,—

"How fair must thou have been unto the eyes
Of wise ascetics old, if even me,
Who have but play'd with armour now and then
Which they assiduously wore, thy form
Can fill with such a calmness of delight!"

Now this very appreciation of natural beauty by the monks has itself a certain signification, since it was not always from a mere poetic inspiration that they derived it, many of them being practical men, untrained to such associations. Let us hear the remarks of an eminent philosopher respecting it. "No description," says Humboldt, "of the eternal snows of the Alps when tinged in the morning or evening with a rosy hue, of the beauty of the blue glacier ice, or of any part of the grandeur of the scenery of Switzerland, have reached us from the ancients, although statesmen and generals, with men of letters in their train, were constantly passing through Helvetia into Gaul. All

* Yepes, Chron. Gen. ii. 209.

† Epist. S. Brunonis, i.

these travellers think only of complaining of the difficulty of the way ; the romantic character of the scenery never seems to have engaged their attention. Julius Cæsar, returning to his legions in Gaul, employed his time while passing over the Alps in preparing a grammatical treatise *de Analogia*.* With Christianity commenced a new race of observers. The tendency of the Christian mind was to show the greatness and goodness of the Creator from the order of the universe, and the beauty of nature ; and this desire to glorify the Deity through his works favoured a disposition for natural descriptions. St. Basil, after visiting the Christian hermitages of Cælo-Syria and Upper Egypt, withdrew into a wilderness near the Armenian river Iris. From there he writes to his friend St. Gregory of Nazianzum in these terms : “ I believe I have at last found the end of my wanderings—a place such as has often hovered before the fancy of us both—a high mountain clothed with thick forests, which shut me in as in a strong fortress. This wilderness is bounded by two deep ravines ; the river, precipitating itself foaming from the mountains, forms an obstacle difficult to overcome. My hut is so placed on the summit of the mountain that I overlook the extensive plain below, and the whole course of the Iris. This beautiful river, more rapid than any which I have ever seen, breaks against the jutting precipice, and throws itself foaming into the deep pool below—to the mountain traveller an object on which he gazes with delight. Shall I describe to thee the fertilizing vapours rising from the moist earth, and the cool breezes from the water ? Shall I speak of the lovely songs of the birds, and of the profusion of flowers ? What charms me most of all is the undisturbed tranquillity of the district. It is only visited occasionally by hunters ; for my wilderness feeds deer, and herds of wild goats, not your bears and wolves. How should I exchange any other place for this ? Alemæon, when he had found the Echinades, would not wander farther.” Humboldt thus traces in the writings of the Christian fathers of the Church “ the fine expression of a love of nature, nursed in the seclusion of the hermitage* ;” and it may be remarked with pleasure, that as a kind of grateful acknowledgment the earliest landscapes, as in the paintings by John Van Eyck for the cathedral of Ghent, exhibit generally some of these religious lovers of natural scenery. It was thought, perhaps, that as landscape is created by the sun, as it is the light which constitutes the chief beauty of landscape—for a bed of dried canes in the Campagna of Rome is more lovely in its colours to an artist’s eye than all the magnificence of nature on the northern side of the Alps,—so it is the

sun of spiritual truth shining in the results of its creative spirit which enhances the beauty of the material world. The affection which wild and picturesque scenes of nature excited in men who, through religious motives, sought retreat, exclaiming as they left all things, "O solitudinem sanguine meliorem, pacatioresque penatibus silvas!" can be traced in monastic literature down to the latest times.

"See the hooded man!

How pleas'd he treads his venerable shades,
His solemn courts! the centre of the grove!
The root-built cave, by far extended rocks
Around embosom'd."

Philoctetes—for poets, it must be owned, seem to have anticipated this love of natural beauty, at least theoretically—when he comes to take leave of his cave, breaks forth in lamentations. "Farewell," he cries, "dear cavern,

χαῖρ', ὦ μέλαθρον ξυμφορον ἐμοί!

farewell, nymphs of these humid meadows! farewell, resounding rocks, and ye sweet fountains which I never thought to leave *!" The Catholic religious man would have quitted such retreats with a regret that might have been expressed in language as poetical, invoking Ilim who had given to himself as well as to the happy birds their dwelling in the grove. St. Leger found abundant consolation at Luxeuil.

"Undique quod tegitur sylvis frondentibus altis,
Passim per gyrum vernantum flore venusto
Pratorum species spectantum mulect ocellos.
Per medium fluvius rapido torrente susurrat
Lignifer, et gestans squamosos gurgite pisces."

So a late writer, describing the scenery round the abbey of Morimond, and speaking of the great lake formed by the monks above the abbey, extending at the upper end to the forest, says, "The monks used to walk on the terrace of the causeway bordering this lake, where every thing breathed a sublime poetry; the song of birds, the moaning of the wind over the forest, the waves that murmured on the shore. The brethren who passed in boats from one side to another saw the heron hovering over its prey. This scene of water and wood, and these harmonies of solitude, transported the minds of the monks, and obtained for them the holy and delicious joys arising from the contemplation of nature and its Author†." As a great writer would say, "Loneliness—after all, the best of Muses—had stimulated

* 1455.

† Dubois, Hist. de l'Abbaye de Morimond, 221.

the creative faculty of their being. The wild and beautiful apparitions of nature had appealed to sympathetic souls. The stars and winds, the pensive sunset and the sanguine break of morn, the sweet solemnity of night, the ancient trees and the light and evanescent flowers—all signs, and sights, and sounds of loveliness and power, fell on ready eyes and on responsive ears *."

Now recurring to what we observed on a former road, one may remark that this choice of locality for retreat, this taste for seclusion and for the natural beauties so often attending it, are significative of the truth of a religion which conferred on men by its moral discipline the power of enjoying such things, and proved in this respect conformable to the desires and sentiments of those men, in all ages, who approach nearest to perfection in wisdom and in virtue.

Do you lament for the hermit like the Chorus, saying,

*οἰκτεῖρω νῦν ἑγὼ γ', ὅπως,
μὴ τοῦ κηδομένου βροτῶν,
μηδὲ ξύντροφον ὄμμ' ἔχων,
δύστανος, μόνος αἰεὶ † ?*

But he feels pleasure at being left to the mercy of the fields which give him roots, and of the crystal springs which do not stop their courses, and of the sun which still yields him grateful light.

"Lo ! there a dim Egerian grotto fringed
With ivy-twine, profusely from its brows
Dependent—enter without further aim
And let me see thee sink into a mood
Of quiet thought."

Prescott, describing Ximenes in the hermitage of Gastañar, a little cabin built with his own hands in a deep forest of chestnuts near the convent of our Lady of Castañar, where he passed his days and nights in prayer and meditation, sustaining life like the ancient anachorites on the green herbs and running waters, expresses surprise that his understanding was not permanently impaired by what he calls these distempered fancies. "It is wonderful," he says, "that this should not have been the result. This period of his life, however, seems to have been always regarded by him with peculiar satisfaction." The fact is, that Catholicism enables some men to enjoy and to turn to profit the solitude of the groves; and that, under its influence, even the horrors of the most savage wilderness became both delightful and instructive; for, as a poet says,

"L'ombre et l'abîme ont un mystère
Que nul mortel ne pénétra ;
C'est Dieu qui leur dit de se taire
Jusqu' au jour où tout parlera !"

View it in what light you will, there is a signal to the centre in the circumstance that Catholicism makes voluntary retreat possible, and even recognizes the utility of seclusion in all ages for some minds, and especially for those men who are to be eminently witnesses to truth. Indeed nearly every one is willing to acknowledge that this index is legible. There are not wanting voices from the farthest limits of philosophy, even at the present day, to require such sacrifices for the sake of the mind. "The scholar," says one of them, "must embrace solitude as a bride. He must be solitary and silent ; he must cherish his soul, expel companions, set his habits to a life of retreat, and then will the faculties rise fair and full within, like forest trees and field flowers ; he will have results, which, when he meets his fellow-men, he can communicate, and they will gladly receive. The garden, the pasture, and the rock are a sort of mechanical aids to this end, and it is for that reason they are of value. The ingenuous soul accepts the hint of spiritual emptiness and waste in society which true nature gives it, and retires and hides, locks the door, and welcomes the hermitage, digests and corrects its past experience, blends it with the new and divine life, and grows with God." "Mankind," says another author of the same class, "have such a deep stake in inward illumination, that there is much to be said by the hermit or solitary religious man in defence of his life of thought and prayer." St. Thomas of Villanova appeals to experience in proof that it is good, and says, "Lo! Christ sits at the mouth of the well. You will find Him solitary. Do not seek Him amidst the multitude, but alone. How well is this known from experience to monks and lovers of solitude who apply to contemplation! for what are all the pleasures and sweetness of the world compared to the joy which a monk finds within his cell? I speak to those who know this. I need not then delay longer here *." When our Lord knew that they were about to make Him a king, we read, "fugit iterum in montem ipse solus." It is in order to be with Him thus on the mountain that so many have retired to dwell in the wilderness. Morimond was a symbolic name signifying "la mort au monde †." It is this death which explains the whole exterior phenomenon ; and even a modern historian, hostile to Catholicism, discerns some of its advantages even in regard to the human side of life ; for he says, "There was one

* Fev. vi. post 3 Dom. Quad.

† Dubois, Hist. de Mor. 21.

thing in the middle ages for which many were grateful to God ; it was, that in the obscure confusion of those times men could pass unknown ; it was, that many persons lived and died unperceived *.” This choice of theirs is commemorated in the hymn for the feast of St. Fructus, bishop of Segovia, in these lines :

“ *Superba tecta civium
Periculosa munera,
Et seculi frequentiam
Vitare Fructo cogitas.
Deserta quæris in via,
Lates cavernis abditus,
Ignotus ut sis omnibus
Solisque notus angelis.
Te solitudo recreat
Amica pacis optima,
Ingrata mundi gentibus
Coolestibus gratissima,
Montis cacumen horridi
Ascendis, ut securius
Volare possis arduæ
Virtutis ad fastigium †.*”

The same renouncement is desired in a later age by one who had learned its wisdom from experience. After describing the troubled state of Rome, Leonardus Arretinus, writing to the bishop of Vicenza, says, “ *Ego autem mirum in modum discrucior, quod non absum, quod non in aliquo urbano vel suburbano, vel denique in aliqua silva inter spelea ferarum abditus hoc tempore lateo, libris studiisque intentus ‡.*” There were no doubt periods of the world when the innocent and holy must have felt utter strangers in it ; and it was in allusion to such an epoch that Brother Giles used to say that holy monks are like wolves, that hardly ever appear in public places, unless for some great necessity, and that then they are off as quickly as possible §. Many men without their vocation, and even Gentiles, though from a different feeling, have said with the poet, “ May the cool grove conceal me from the people.” “ *Heureux anachorètes,*” exclaims a great modern minister of state, “ *heureux anachorètes, qui pour dâpifer aviez un corbeau !*” He deemed them happy for having half forgotten what world or worldling meant. There is indeed an humble, popular, industrious, and often suffering world, with which such philosophers are little acquainted, and which at all times may be quite as useful a school as any other for developing the virtues of the human heart ;

* Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vi. 75.

† Arevalus, *Hymnodia Hispanica*.

‡ *Epist. lib. iii. l.*

§ Buccius, *Lib. Aureus Conform.*

but, on the other hand, there is nothing irrational in believing that, even under the most favourable circumstances, there are persons for whom a retreat from the world may be useful. It is not the monk or hermit, but it is the wearied statesman, like Chateaubriand, who exaggerates its importance, saying, "There is nothing good excepting retreat;" but still no candid observer will deny the advantages which may accrue to some men from taking refuge in a life of solitude. A great English writer says, "He who lives wisely to himself forgets himself in the interest he takes in what is passing in the busy world which he looks at through the loop-holes of retreat, not wanting to mingle in the fray. It is as if no one knew there was such a person, and he wished no one to know it. It is such a life as a pure spirit might be supposed to lead, and such an interest as it might take in the affairs of men, calm, contemplative, passive, distant, touched with pity for their sorrows, smiling at their follies without bitterness, sharing their affections, but not troubled by their passions." The ancients themselves, for some reason or other, greatly esteemed a mode of life resembling the eremitical, inasmuch that they gave examples of men choosing to live in sylvan retreat. Pliny speaks of one who lived forty years on the top of the mountain of Tmolus*; and the tragic poet recognized some advantages resulting from such a life when he represented Agamemnon saying to an old servant, "I envy your retreat."

ζηλω δ' ἀνδρῶν ὃς ἀκίνδυνον
βίον ἐξεπέρας' ἀγνώς, ἀκλειής*
τοὺς δ' ἐν τιμαῖς ἤσσον ζηλω†.

Of course the motives in these cases were not the same as when Christians retired from the world; for if the latter fixed their dwelling in a solitude like that hermitage dedicated to Nuestra Señora de la Aurora, commanding that delicious view from an eminence in Valencia, we must remember that their retreat was entered upon with a view of benefiting others rather than of merely gratifying a selfish predilection; but of this we must reserve proof for a future occasion. For the present it is sufficient to observe that the existence of hermitages, and of such stations for solitary men as the word monastery, from *στήριον*, a station, implies, proves that in the Catholic Church has been perpetuated the spirit, and even the life, of the ancient prophets; for, as Trithemius asks, "What did Elias perform which the Carmelite brethren do not imitate‡?" Antonio de Escobar observes that the chain of such men has never been

* N. H. vii. 49.

† Iph. in Aul. 17.

‡ Trithem. de Laudibus Ord. Carmelit.

broken. "The Jews," he says, "thought that John was Elias, from the similitude of his dress; and Gabriel predicted that he would precede the Messiah in the spirit of Elias, both inhabiting the desert. Thus the spirit of Elias, by a continued series of religious men, was transmitted through John to the monks and hermits of the middle ages. St. Chrysostom expressly styles John a monk, and exclaims, 'Happy are they who imitate him, living in the wilderness, than whom, amongst the born of woman, no one was ever greater *!'"

The opponents of Catholicity, in the sixteenth century, in attempting to disprove the similarity, had recourse to singular devices. They would not even allow that St. John the Baptist wore a rough garment. It was only kamlot, said they, Anglicè camlet. It was in that country a very respectable kind of dress, κόσμος, urbana ac civilis †. But the continuance and transmission of the same character was a fact not to be evaded, and certainly no one should take leave of the hermitages without remarking the signal which is furnished by the wonderful gifts possessed, age after age, by those inhabiting them. Yes, this life of consecrated solitude has produced in Christian times examples of that grace which raises human nature to a surprising elevation above itself. If we sought a forest analogy, we might say that as an oak, or any other tree which grows alone, or on the outside of a forest, is always more firm and unbending than one growing in sheltered places; so does the hermit appear upon the page of history invested with an eminent degree of fortitude and independence. It is not a learned man that we shall find here, which accounts perhaps for Johnson qualifying the hermit who accompanied Milton from Rome to Naples as "a companion from whom little could be expected." "After mature consideration," say the constitutions of Camaldoli, "our fathers decided that the study of letters should not be pursued in our hermitages; for the eremitical life requires not much science, but much devotion and fervour; since its end is to follow the way of the spirit, and to dwell mentally in the cell with God ‡." For this very reason, however, an archbishop of Toledo, in the fifth century, who had been a hermit of St. Augustine, speaks in one of his epistles with delight of the eremitical character, saying, "Utinam mihi fide simplici, quam Catholica per universum mundum docet Ecclesia, sic donet Deus esse contentum, ut omni si fieri potest, hujus vitæ miserabili tempore orationi et jejuniis vacans plangam cum pusillis fratribus meis delicta multa!" But, not to remark that even these hermits

* In Evang. Comment. tom. vi. 82.

† Chytraeus apud Stapleton. Prompt. 13.

‡ Constit. Eremit. Camald. c. 62.

were required, besides the study of the Psalms extra choir, to read every day before complin, "*quia sanctum illud otium sanctas desiderat occupationes* *," it by no means follows that such a companion was one from whom nothing could be learned. That the contemplation of silently living nature combined with Catholic devotion can produce great moral and spiritual results, seems a conclusion fully borne out by the history of hermits even in later times, without going back to the deserts that beheld Anthony and Paul. Let us observe instances. Father Thomas the Confessor, and Father Donat of Florence, on their way to visit a holy hermit, finding St. Catherine of Sienna in an ecstasy, nevertheless invited her to accompany them. "We are going," they said, "to visit the hermit; will you come with us?" It seems at first strange that they should have ventured to propose such an interruption to a heavenly state; but perhaps when we have observed the men whom the forest hides from public view, it will not be so difficult to conceive why they did so. Let us first proceed to that holy mountain of Catalonia, where St. Ignatius of Loyola went to make his general confession to the hermit John Xanones, his first director. Who is not amazed at finding the religious man living in such absolute seclusion? "'Tis above belief," one is tempted to exclaim with Lisander, in the *Lover's Progress*, adding, "Do you inhabit here?" when we shall hear for answer that reply of Lidian,—

"Mine own free choice, sir;
I live here poorly but contentedly,
Because I find enough to feed my fortunes;
Indeed too much: these wild fields are my gardens;
The crystal sources, they afford the waters,
And grudge not their sweet streams to quench afflictions;
The hollow rocks their beds, which, though they are hard,
(The emblems of a doting lover's fortune,)
Yet they are quiet; and the weary slumbers
The eyes catch there, softer than beds of down, friend."

And if you seek to know more you will find cause for greater admiration. The hermits of Montserrat, remarkable for their sanctity, would furnish a long catalogue. We find the following details respecting them in the history of the mountain. "Brother Benedict of Arragon from his childhood desired to serve God in this life on the mountain. After a long trial he was permitted to have a hermitage, and there he persevered with such merit that it is supposed he equalled the ancient anachorites of Egypt.

* Const. Camal. 1.

The following lines are found inscribed on the hermitage of the Holy Cross :—

*"Occidit hac sacra frater Benedictus in æde,
Inclutus et fama, et religione sacer.
Hic sexaginta et septem castissimus annos,
Vixit in his saxis, te, Deus alma, precans,
Usque senex, senis mansit curvatus et annis,
Corpus humo retulit venerat unde prius,
Ast anima exultans, clarum repetivit Olympum,
Nunc sedet in summo glorificata throno."*

Brother Francis de Vesar became a hermit at the age of seventeen. He saw, we are assured, visions of the blessed Virgin. Brother Christoble de Zamora had the gift of prophecy, and in the year of his death foretold the decease of thirty monks of the abbey within the year, the event verifying his words. Brother Maur of Alfaro, when but a boy, was elected master of the novices, and acquitted himself with the wisdom of age. Angels, it is said, were heard in the air at his death. Brother Alfonso of Burgos, preceptor to the son of the marquis of Gibrleon, passing by Montserrat, felt a vocation for that holy life, and receiving the habit, became a model of piety and all virtues, spending the last twenty-seven years of his life in a hermitage in prayer, reading, and in the composition of devout books, esteemed by all for his sanctity, receiving visits from the king, Philip II., who desired to hear him speak. Brother John Martinez bore on his countenance proof of the fervour of his love for God. But we have not time to visit others on this holy mountain. Let those who desire to do so consult its historians*. France, too, beheld memorable examples of eremitical sanctity. On the heights of Romberg, during thirty-three years, had lived a hermit, once a powerful courtier, by name Romarie, founder of Remiremont. In a vision he beheld the misfortunes that were about to fall upon France, and the Church, and on the son of the holy king Sigebert. He said that he had only three days to live; but he left the mountain, and proceeded to the palace, which he had not seen for thirty years. He arrived at midnight; Grimold, whose hostility to the Church had transpired, was informed of his arrival; he hastened to meet him, carrying a torch to light his steps. The man of God seemed to him at that moment like an angel from heaven and of awful magnitude; so that he trembled on beholding him. No one heard what passed between them; but Grimold was seen at parting to embrace the hermit and offer him presents. The old

* Montegut. Hist. de Montserrat.

man withdrew, and died three days afterwards. No less remarkable are the records which exist respecting English anachorites. Let us hear William of Newbury: "In the twelfth century, the venerable hermit Godricus de Finchala, a solitary place so called, not far from the city of Durham, on the river Wear, lived to the confusion of the great and noble, it being so chosen by God. He was a rustic, knowing nothing but Christ Jesus and him crucified, inhaling to his very bones the fire which the Lord sent on earth. When a youth he went on foot to visit the sepulchre of our Lord, and thence sought a place of retreat. Directed, it is said, in a dream, to Finchal, there he dwelt with his sister till her death. There he tilled a little plot of ground, which was surrounded with trees, living on alms. He was so esteemed by the monks of Durham, that one of the seniors of the community was deputed to visit him frequently to instruct his rustic simplicity, and occasionally to administer the sacrament to him. I myself, in those days," adds the historian, "desired to see him, and to speak with him. In his countenance was a wondrous dignity and beauty; he continually called on Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He was buried in the very spot where his body lay in his last sickness*." Mathew Paris supplies other details respecting him. "This year," he says, "the venerable hermit Godrik left this world, and exchanged his temporal for eternal life. At first he had remained two years in a solitude near Carlisle without any means of subsistence. Afterwards, he lived a year and some months in a desert place called Eschedale; then in an earthen hut scooped out of the bank of the river Wear†." A monk of Durham, called Nicholas, being pressed by many to write his life, went to the hermit and told him his intention. Godrik was troubled. "Friend, you wish to know the life of Godrik? Hear it then. Godrik at first was a gross rustic, debauched and perjured, a glutton and a deceiver; to-day he is half dead, and a mere dog, a vile worm, a hypocrite, a devourer of alms, greedy of pleasure, lazy, prodigal, and ambitious, troublesome to all who come near him. Write down that about your false hermit, and worse still." Then he was silent, and the monk retired all abashed‡. The fens of Lincolnshire beheld another example of still wider celebrity. "The blessed man Guthlac," says a contemporary, "was earnestly intent on Christ's service, so that never was aught else in his mouth but Christ's praise, nor in his heart but virtue, nor in his mind but peace and love and pity; nor did any man ever see him angry or slothful in Christ's service; but one might ever perceive in his countenance love and peace;

* *Rer. Anglic.* ii. 20.† *Ad ann.* 1170.‡ *Ad ann.* 1171.

and evermore sweetness was in his temper and wisdom in his breast, and there was so much cheerfulness in him, that he always appeared alike to acquaintances and to strangers *."

But we must not pursue further this bye track of the hermits, from which we can here regain the main road leading to the monastery. The path to the hermitage, after all, can hardly be discovered now except in history; but there it has its proper signals like every other. They point to Catholicism as having existed when the human race was comparatively young, and submissive to influences that denoted its youth and were applicable to it. As in excavating the earth we discover in the most ancient strata the vestiges of a colossal organization, so in exploring the history of Catholicism, we meet traces of manners and modes of life which resemble nothing that can be found in later generations, but which demonstrate the antiquity of that religion, and the succession of its providential adaptations to the wants of mankind in different stages of society.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROAD OF RETREAT (*continued*).



THE second avenue from this road may be constituted by the history of monastic institutions, and by a consideration of the causes and motives which led to their establishment. Monasteries may be said to be coeval with Christianity. From the day when peace was first given to the Church, it has never been seen a single moment without religious communities. Can then any proof be wanting to show how intimately they are related to it? that they are its spontaneous fruit †? Every where, as soon as the Christian religion was preached in a country, institutions of this kind arose, while it often happened that the first men who preached the Gospel to heathen nations were themselves monks. Much as one may abhor using strong language when it can give pain to any one, there seems to be no alternative but to conclude that a religion which absolutely rejects the principle of monasteries, and which can show no such institu-

* Felix of Crowland, Anglo-Saxon version Life of St. Guthlac.

† Balnes.

tions, can be neither Catholic, nor Apostolic, nor ancient. Those men who transmit the monastic life have invented nothing essential to it, and that cannot be abrogated at any time, which the first Christians did not see and approve of; since they only continue, with certain variations rendered necessary by circumstances, the work began in the cradle of civilization, which was propagated from Egypt, from Paul, and Anthony, and Pachomius, through all lands,—by Hilarion in Syria, by Basil in Asia Minor, by Audeus in Persia and India, by Athanasius, Eusebius, and Isaac in Italy, by St. Augustin in Africa, by Honoratus and Cassian in Provence, Hilary and Martin in Gaul, by St. Germain d'Auxerre in Ireland, and by St. Augustin in England*. St. Jerome, a competent witness, whatever some of the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries may pretend, expressly says, that to see monks is to see men resembling some of the primitive Christians, "*talis prima credentium fuit Ecclesia quales nunc monachos esse videmus*†."

But history has even something more to add in regard to their family antiquity. For it pronounces that the thought which constitutes their foundation belongs to the old as well as to the new learning, to the Hebrew as well as to the Christian, and that some of the privileges and influences of race and of the fountain-head of theology linger in them still. As a great author says, ascribing the remark to a profound child of Israel, "Protestantism knows nothing about these things. How can it? Its disciples a few centuries back were tattooed savages. This is one advantage which Rome has over it, and which it never can understand." But let us observe monasteries in their present form. The monks of St. Augustin were in the mountains of Pisa in the year 389‡. About 431, the bishop of Carthage, Quod-vult-Deus, with many hermits whom St. Augustin had left desolate, having been placed by the barbarians on board of ships that were not sound, arrived safely at Naples. Amongst these were Gaudiosus and Agnellus, who built near Naples the monastery of Neridanus, from which house afterwards Palladius was sent into Ireland§. It was Minicia, a noble Spanish lady, who received Donatus, arriving from Africa, and the first monks who came into Spain along with him. Besides the formal attestation of history, there are many things in the monastic rules which indicate the antiquity of this mode of life, and which almost startle us by revealing how the monks existed before men had made some discoveries which are often

* Luc. Holst. Dissert. Præm. ad Reg. Mon.

† Descript. Ec. in Fid.

‡ Crusenius, Monast. August. P. i. c. 20.

§ Id. Pars ii. c. 1.

supposed to be coeval with our present civilization. Thus, in one code we read, "on a cloudy day, when the sun is hidden, monks on the journey or in the monastery must say their office as nearly as they can guess at the proper hour; and if they should say it too soon or too late, the obscurity of the air will serve them an excuse, their error having been involuntary *."

As the general, so the particular histories of orders and monasteries, many of which, like that by Tiraboschi, of the ancient and celebrated abbey of St. Sylvester of Nonantola, are master pieces of erudition, will be found to be significative. When the third part of Siquenza's history of the Hieronimite order appeared, Philip the third king of Spain sat up a whole night to read the fascinating folio; and when Dom Felibien presented to Louis XIV. a copy of his history of the abbey of St. Denis, which had cost him nine years of labour, the king, turning over the leaves, seemed surprised at the magnitude of the work; and some days after he said to the cardinal de Noailles, "Truly I did not believe that the history of St. Denis could be so varied and so agreeable as it is. I have found it most interesting, and this father must have very good materials, for I find that his account of my reign is very accurate." The fact is, the annals of such houses might be made to embrace the history not alone of one kingdom, but of the Church. Many religious houses can be pointed out, either still standing or in ruins, of an antiquity which brings us back to very early times. Lerins, Glastonbury, Marmoutier, Fulda, Subiaco, St. Peter de Cardenna, were not houses of a modern date. This latter, which is the oldest monastery in Spain, was founded by the Lady Sanetia, wife of King Theodorie. It was built twelve years before the city of Burgos. After being destroyed by the Moors, from whom 200 of its monks suffered martyrdom under Cesa the cruel African king, it was rebuilt by Alphonso the Great, who charged the count Diego Porcelos with the work of restoration. Then its great benefactors were the counts Ferdinand Gonzalez and Garcia Fernandez, who chose their burial there. Dear was it also to the King Ferdinand I., to Don Rodrigo de Vivar, celebrated as the Cid, who chose to be carried to it for burial from Valentia, and also to innumerable great men who were there interred †. About one league from Covarrubias, in New Castille, is the monastery of San Pedro de Arlanzo, which existed in the time of the Goths, as it was in it that Wamba took the cowl. It was restored in 912 by the count Fernand Gonzalez, the founder of the Castilian monarchy, who died and was buried in it. Corbie, founded by St. Bathilde, so vast and celebrated in late times, is

* Regula Magistri, c. lvi.

† Yepes, Chron. Gen. i. 90.

another of these venerable places of which the history would embrace that of the oldest Christian monarchy.

According to one ancient book, the origin of the monastery of St. Michael, at Odrorf, was the great light which appeared in the sky all through the night which St. Boniface spent in a tent on the banks of the river Oraba, after preaching to the pagans. St. Michael, it is said, appeared to the bishop encouraging him. The next morning he said mass, and proceeding on his journey, inquired to whom the ground belonged, and hearing that Hugo the Elder was the proprietor, he asked him to give it to him; the man complied, and was the first of the Thuringians to offer his inheritance to Christ. St. Boniface then returned, cleared the spot from trees, and built the monastery*. The antiquity of some religious houses would seem fabulous if it did not rest upon unquestionable evidence. Thus at Treves, the monastery of St. Matthias, than which the Benedictine order did not possess a more ancient house, was founded more than four hundred years before the birth of St. Benedict; so that it had served as an asylum for the disciples of Christ during more than 1547 years†. The history of monasteries is wound up with that of the greatest and best men of Christian ages. Justinian, Theodosius, Charlemagne, Alfred the Great, Edward the Confessor, St. Louis, to speak only of kings, would have thought the overthrow of monasteries identical with the overthrow of the Christian civilization, of respect for law and justice, of veneration for sanctity and for learning, of esteem for innocence and goodness. Let us observe, too, how they loved particular houses, the names of which, to use the expression of a great author, are not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world. Confining our attention to the west, dear to Charlemagne was the monastery of Centula or of St. Riquier, which is within a short walk of Abbeville, where, in the year 800, he kept the festival of Easter. The father of the emperor, St. Henry, used to proceed from the village of Abudiacus every night to the monastery of St. Emmeran, at Ratisbon, and there, on a stone seat which used to be pointed out till the Revolution, he used to wait until the doors of the church were opened‡. Alphonso, the first king of Portugal, speaking of his great victory over the Moors at Santarem, which he ascribed to the visible protection of St. Michael, says, "I remained there thirty days in the monastery of Aleobaza, praising God and thinking on the establishment of his reign." The Benedictine monastery at Memleben, in Thuringia, founded and enriched by Saxon em-

* Thuringia Sacra, 19.

† Yepes, Chron. Gen. ii. 173.

‡ Raderus, Bavaria Sancta, i. 103.

perors, was celebrated as being the house in which two emperors had died,—St. Henry in 935, and Otho the Great,—as also from being that in which was solemnized the marriage of Henry the Fowler with Matilda*. In 1137, when St. Bernard of Clairvaux was on a visit at the abbey of Monte Cassino, the archives of the house record, that Raynulphus, duke of Apulia, Robert, prince of Capua, and some other great Norman princes were present there with him †. When Dagobert II. came forth against the cruel Ebruin, each step was signalized by his stopping to found or endow a monastery. At Tongres it is Horrécen and Stavelo which he enriches; at Cologne it is Malmondier; in the forest of Hagnenau, it is Königsbruck; at Spire, it is Wissembourg; at Strasbourg, it is the cathedral to which he gives his palace of Isenbourg and the domains of Hant-Mundat. In Alsace he founds Surbourg, Haselach, and St. Sigismund, near Rouffach, and enriches the abbey of Scantern. But let us hear the emperor Lothaire speaking in an ancient charter preserved in the archives of Monte Cassino. “We ought,” he says, “the more to defend, exalt, and venerate this monastery, as we know it to have been honoured and endowed by our predecessors. Why is it wonderful that we should defend to the best of our power this monastery, since we know that this was always done gloriously by our predecessors; and they indeed had their own chamber there, so that some of them, laying aside cares and carnal obstacles, chose to be buried there rather than in their own houses? What shall I say of that most holy Charles, worthy of all memory, who having resigned the imperial sceptre, and the august dignity, led there the life of a cœnobite? What shall I tell of Pepin, the brother of that Charles, who being in Germany when his brother Charles died, unwilling that he should be buried elsewhere, sent his body there? Rachis, also, king of the Langobards, leaving his kingdom, came to the same venerable monastery, and there led a monastic life till his death. What shall I relate of the emperors Justinian, Justin, Theodoric, Pepin, Charles, the other Pepin, Charlemagne, the two Lewis’s, Hugo, the two Lothaires, Albert, the three Otho’s, and the five Henry’s? What of Michael Romanus and Alexius, who so loved and enriched the church of Cassino? There was the imperial camera, so that emperors came themselves at the head of the whole Roman army to deliver it. Henry the Pious, the invincible and most Christian emperor, entered Italy for the sake of defending this monastery at the head of 180,000 men, when, rescuing it from the hands of the Capuan princes, he restored it to liberty. Conrad also, the august emperor, and his son Henry, came with

* Thuringia Sacra, 749.

† Hist. Cass. vii. 357.

an army of 16,000 men to defend the same church, when the unjust tyrant Pandulf subjected it to the yoke of slavery*." But without dwelling longer on such details, we must observe in general that all the eminent monasteries of Europe were, in some way, connected with the history of nations as well as of illustrious princes, who seem to have loved humanity, who had at heart on all occasions the political and social welfare of their subjects, as well as the general interests of the Christian religion. The king Alphonso VI., of Spain, was so munificent a benefactor to Cluny, that in all the monasteries of the order prayers were offered for the repose of his soul and that of his wife. At Cluny every day at the first table of the refectory, the dinner of Alphonso was served as if the king were to dine there, and then it was given to a poor man. For a great while after his death the mass for his soul was said daily at the very hour of his death, and yearly his anniversary was celebrated with as much solemnity as that of the emperor Henry the Black and the empress Agnes. So also Peter the Venerable writing to Roger, king of Sicily, says, "The king of Germany loves Cluny much. The king of Spain, the king of England, the king of the Franks also love us." King Charles V. of France built near his palace a vast monastery for the Celestins, who were then in great favour, and here he used to make a retreat occasionally, conversing with the monks, and assisting at their office. No less dear was that great Benedictine monastery of San Facundo, at Sahagun, to Ferdinand the Great of Spain, who used often to make a retreat in it to meditate on eternity. This abbey had been founded in 905 by Alonso III. el Magno, and here many of the early kings of Spain retired, and died monks, as Bermudo I. in 791, Alphonso IV. in 931, Ramiro II. in 950, and Sancho of Leon in 1067. Many kings died also in the habit of the Minors, to whose convents they had been intimately attached, as the emperor of Constantinople, whose daughter was wife of the emperor Frederick II.; Robert, of the royal house of France; king James, of Arragon; Ferdinand, king of Castille; three kings of Portugal, Ferdinand, Peter, and Alphonso; Frederick, king of Sicily; Lewis, king of Hungary; Henry, king of Cyprus; and John, king of Arminia†. The emperor Charles V. lived with the friars of St. Yuste on terms of friendly familiarity; which seems rather strange, if they were so "stupid" as they are said to have been. He knew them all by name, and frequently conversed with them. When the visitors of the order made their triennial inspection, they represented to him, with all respect, that his majesty himself was the only

* Gattula, i. 249, Hist. Cassinens.

† Buechius, Liber Conformit. Vitæ Francisc. ad Vit. Christi, 103.

inmate of the convent with whom they had any fault to find ; and they entreated him to discontinue the benefactions which he was in the habit of bestowing on the fraternity, and which Jeromites ought not to receive. "Monachism," says a late writer, "had for him a charm, vague yet powerful, such as soldiiership has for the young, and he was ever fond of catching glimpses of the life which he had resolved, sooner or later, to embrace. When the empress died, he retired to indulge his grief in the cloisters of La Sisa, near Toledo. After his return from one of his African campaigns, he visited the noble convent of Mejorado, near Olmedo, and spent two days in familiar converse with the Jeromites, sharing their refectory fare, and walking for hours in their garden-alleys of venerable cypress. When he held his court at Bruxelles, he was often a guest at the convent of Groenendael, and the monks commemorated his friendship by erecting there his statue in bronze*. Even kings only distinguished for their political greatness are found to play a great part in the history of such houses. Henry II., king of England, to show his regard magnificently towards the monks of Grandmont, on one occasion, while the monastery was building, sent from Rupella to Grandmont, eight hundred waggons laden with lead, each waggon being drawn by eight English horses of the same colour†. It will probably appear to some persons as if facts of this kind alone were significative ; for it is difficult to suppose that it was not on a foundation of truth which rested a religion that had impressed the great and powerful of the earth with a sense of the importance of institutions strictly popular, of which the fruit was peace and virtue, and the object eternity. Moreover, the road of monasteries, being essentially a branch of the road of historians, cannot but lead to those general views of Catholicity which we enjoyed when traversing the forest by that great line of communication. There is no abbey or convent of any antiquity that does not recall some illustrious names, of which we have only to follow up the history to find ourselves in presence of some indication of the truth of Catholicism. St. Benedict himself being of the Anician family, one of the most illustrious of the patrician races of old Rome, points to the conversion of the Pagan world by Catholicism. The mediæval monasteries are all monuments of its power in converting the human heart to holiness. "Here dwelt together on one perch," as Hugo of St. Victor says, "the hawk and the dove, the once formidable warrior and the gentle child of peace‡." It was in these asylums that the most glo-

* Stirling, c. v.

† Levesque, *Annales Ord. Grandimontis*, 1.

‡ De Bestiis, *Prief.*

rious Christian races frequently expired. The last scion of a noble family used to convert his ancestral castle into a monastery, hoping to secure the perpetuity of the house in a spiritual progeny, when on the spot whence earthly combatants had once issued forth with spear and shield, the heavenly combatants armed themselves with prayer. The lords of Cappenberg thus acted, "*Castrum Cappenbergense in claustrum convententes, et militiam secularem in militiam spiritualis exercitii commutantes*.*" So also the blessed Otho, a Minor, was the last of the noble family of Riettenburg when he renounced the world to serve God in great poverty in the monastery of Walderpae in Bavaria, founded by his ancestors†. It was to such asylums as that those great personages retired whom the ebbing sea of worldly grandeur threatened to leave stranded in desertion. Thus, after the death of her husband, Henry III., Eleonora Plantagenet retired to France, and took the veil at Montargis, in a convent of sisters of St. Dominick, founded by a sister of the earl of Leicester. But in modern times an historian of Henry IV. describes a more striking instance. "The court," he says, "was astonished when the marchioness de Belle-Isle, on the death of her husband, retired with such little noise from Brittany to enter the monastery of the Fucillantes, at Tholouse. Generous resolution in a lady of that illustrious house of Longueville, one of the first in France, allied with the Bourbons! The love of God took such root in her heart, that all earthly interests were excluded. She could neither think of the base world, nor speak of that world, nor remain in that world, feeling how difficult it was for her to be in that world without belonging to it; and that she was not made for such a world but to die in it to all dead things, to live truly and immortally to God. The difficulties to her resolution were great,—great in her house, greater on the journey, and very great even on her arrival. On her way she met the bishop of Bayonne, who did not know her, but thought that she was some lady who had no other object but the pursuit of her affairs in the parliament of Tholouse. On the third day, discovering who she was, and what was her intention, he wrote immediately to the first president of the parliament of Tholouse, to hinder her from pursuing her purpose, and to prohibit the Fucillantes from receiving her; but she had taken her measures so well against all accidents, that she was beforehand with those who sought to detain her. Her brothers followed her, and returned only with astonishment at her resolution. She appeared as content at her change of life as a mariner on being saved from the tempest. She prayed

* Ap. Hurter.

† Raderus, *Bavaria Sancta*, ii. 252.

them to take no more thought for her, since in so perfect a state of felicity she had no need of any thing in the world. Thus," concludes this historian, "can divine love accomplish all things*." Monastic history abounds with instances of illustrious families ending in the cloister. The daughters of Dante died nuns in Verona. "I like this conclusion," says Ampère, looking at the poetical and even worldly side of such actions. "Respectability," he continues, "is a mean thing after glory. There is but one way of retiring from the latter. It is to humble oneself before the paternal renown, and to exclaim with Hippolyte,

"Et moi, fils inconnu d'un si glorieux père."

But the obscurity of the cloister does not ill accord with a name surrounded with the respect of posterity. Such a name hides itself nobly in the holy shades of the sanctuary. It is not descending from glory to raise oneself to God †." Whatever may be thought of such views, the fact is sufficiently remarkable. As the Loire and the Rhine lose their respective names and their forms when they fall into the ocean, so we find great individuals associated with the noblest themes of history, delivered from their names and their forms by entering into this life of religion which Catholicism provides for those who have reason so to lose themselves, without a wish to avoid that lot; as at Fontevault, which had for abbesses fourteen princesses of the blood-royal, and when so many royal generations slept that it used to be called the cemetery of kings; and as at the Carmelites in Paris, where persons of the most illustrious name are only commemorated by their religious title,—a Gontault de Biron as Mother Anne of St. Joseph, a La Tour d'Auvergne de Bouillon as Sister Emilie of the Passion, a D'Arpajon as Sister Mary of the Cross, a Stuart, of whom Madame de Sevigné speaks, as Sister Marguerite of St. Augustin. In the archives of that house nothing else is added but the number and year of profession, the year and the place of decease. Most of its inhabitants have left no other trace, as only some few are faintly sketched in the manuscripts of the convent. "It is in trembling," says the circular, "that we dare to add a few details respecting this dear sister, who obtained for our houses from the king such great alms; for she entreated, and by her confessor commanded, me to insert nothing but her age and death, and not even to mention that this rule was adhered to at her request." Then of another we read, "If I durst record them, I could have many edifying things to relate, but her repeated entreaties compel me

* Pierre Mathieu, Hist. de Hen. IV. 367.

† Ampère, Voyage Dantesque.

to silence ;” and again of another, “ Her humility forces me to silence according to her last request, offered in presence of the community*.” In such houses the lines of Alanus have a sublime application :—

“ Apparet phantasma viris, sed rursus ab illis
Vertitur in nihilum, quod fuit ante nihil ;
Sic et adest et abest fugitivi gloria mundi
Non prius adventat quam quasi somnus eat †.”

There is, therefore, here a signal pointing to the centre in Catholicism, when we consider the number of the great and good who, in all ages, have found consolation and peace in the institutions which it has founded. Let us recal to mind some few of these instances. Passing over the examples of Roman senators and of noble ladies of the first ages of Christianity, observe what later generations furnished. On the fall of Pepin Didier, king of the Lombards, obtaining his life, and being confined by imperial orders in the monastery of Corbie, religion there and through that holy institution consoled him for the loss of his crown. Thassilo, duke of Bavaria and king of Lombardy, found in his misfortunes a similar resource in the abbey of Laurissa, where he became a monk. He was a son of Charlemagne's sister, and had been always a generous founder of religious houses, and a defender of widows and orphans. By his uncle he was made king of the Langobards, but subsequently, having rebelled against him, and being defeated in battle, he was seized, and, it is said, blinded, by being placed between two burning mirrors, and allowed to go where he wished. He then came to the Benedictine monastery of Laurissa in the habit of a poor stranger, and there he remained till his death unknown. It is said that after many years his uncle Charlemagne came to the monastery, and one night, saying his prayers in the church according to his custom, he saw the blind brother led by an angel from altar to altar, and that the next morning he told what he had seen to the abbot, and asked him who was that brother ; but that the abbot assured him he knew not ‡. Henry, nephew of Albert, duke of Austria, found a similar asylum in the Order of Mercy. He took arms on his uncle's side when he maintained his election as king of the Romans, and being surrounded in battle by a squadron of cavalry, and thrown to the ground, and then ridden over, he was left for dead on the field. At midnight, recovering from his swoon, and finding himself among the dead and dying, he had strength, by dawn of day, to

* Cousin, M^{me} de Longueville.

† Lib. Parabol. Alani.

‡ Raderus, Bavaria Sancta, i. 84.

crawl to an eminence and survey the scene, when God, opening the eyes of his soul, he resolved to make a pilgrimage to St. James to evince his gratitude for his escape. From Compostella he proceeded to Montserrat; but, falling sick at Perpignan, the blessed Virgin, clad in the mantle of the Order of Mercy, was said to have appeared to him and invited him to take that habit in the convent there. The next morning, finding himself restored to health, he proceeded to the house indicated, and after disclosing his vision, received the habit. There did this great prince live and die as the blessed father Henry of Austria*. We have another of these examples in James the Conqueror, king of Arragon, who, through regret at the defeat of his army by the Moors of Valencia, resigned the crown to his son, took the Cistercian habit, and vowed to pass the rest of his life in the monastery of Pueblo, where he chose his sepulture. But no instance was more celebrated than that of king Rodrick. The concordant account of the Romanceros, that, having escaped from the battle, he died later in a hermitage, is generally credited†. The relation which begins with

“Despues que el rey don Rodrigo,”

proceeds in these terms: “After leaving Spain, the king Don Rodrick wandered on whither chance directed him. He took to the mountains, to be most secure from the Moors. He met a shepherd tending his flock: ‘Tell me, good man,’ said he, ‘is there any habitation near where I can find rest, for I am spent with fatigue.’ ‘In vain,’ he replied, ‘you look for one in this desert, there is only a hermitage where a man of God lives. Take this bread and this piece of smoked meat to support you on your way.’ The shepherd then directed him to the hermitage. The sun was setting when he left him, and he walked on till he found the spot. On arriving at it he knelt down, and thanked God, and then accosted the hermit, who asked what brought him there? ‘I am the unhappy Rodrick, once a king, I am come to do penance with you. Be not displeased, but for the sake of God and of St. Mary receive me.’ The hermit astonished said, ‘Certes you have chosen the right road for your salvation, God will pardon you.’” Pierre Mathieu relates an instance of retreat in comparatively modern times, less memorable, indeed, than the last, but which at the time excited the admiration of the world. Speaking of Henry, duc de Joyeuse, mareschal de France, and of his conversion, he observes how strange in general all such changes are. “The passage,” he says, “from temporal to spiritual warfare is very

* Hist. de l'Ordre de la Mercy, 251.

† Damas Hinard, Romancero.

difficult. A man will go boldly to the breach, who, in this spiritual combat, plays the poltroon, though he may have only to make head against a small handful of little thoughts. What a contrast," he continues, "between the proud duke and the humble Capuchin! Yesterday all splendour and ambition; to-day wrapped in a patched cowl. Yesterday, disputing precedence with the duke of Vantadour in the session of the states of Languedoc; to-day, content to walk after the last of the hooded friars. As soon as he received the answer of the general of the order from Rome, he settled his affairs, and for the last time entering his carriage, passed from the Hotel du Bonchage to the convent. The door is opened to him; it is closed to his attendants; and he put off with his dress all the vanities of the world. Then who like him when he appeared in churches? Who ever drew more breathless attention? No lute was ever sweeter than his tongue; and in the opinion of a great observer of the time, he was greater and more honoured in that abasement than he had ever been in all the grandeur of his former condition. His example reminded the great, who thought only and always of the earth, that early in life men must sometimes think also of heaven, speak of heaven, and look towards heaven, if they wish ever to enter heaven. Every one listened to him with a good disposition, because his actions corresponded with his words*." William of Newbury alludes to a similar example as to an event, in his age by no means uncommon: "I remember," he says, "when I was a youth to have seen a certain venerable monk coming from the parts of the East, who had formerly been in the army of Raimund, prince of Antioch, of whom he related great wonders†." Bede speaks of one who, after being the minister of king Egfrid, became a monk, and used to be seen "winnowing corn with the monks, leading the flocks, working in the garden and kitchen, rejoicing to exercise cheerful obedience‡." St. Kentigern, afterwards raised to an episcopal chair, had been the cook of a monastery, and he was of the royal family of Scotland. The highest magistrates were often seen to seek the asylum of a religious house. Thus, in 1426, Clopton, knight and lord chief-justice of England, renounced, with all its honours, the world, and for the love of Jesus Christ entered into the poor and penitential order of St. Francis, in which he persevered religiously to the end of his life§. Similarly Don Francis Aranda, judge of Arragon, under the kings John and Martin, a man eminently

* Hist. de Hen. IV. liv. ii.

† Guil. Neub. Rer. Anglie. i. 20.

‡ Hist. Abb. Wiremuth.

§ Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, 197.

the friend of truth, remote from the least cupidity, and beloved by every one, at length, despising all things, withdrew into retreat, in the celebrated Carthusian monastery of the Porta Cœli*. These historical associations include also innumerable names of interest connected with the chivalry and nobility of Europe in general. In 1083, Berthold of Constance, praising the three great German monasteries of St. Blase, of the holy Saviour at Schafhausen, and of St. Aurelius, particularly remarks "how many great nobles, marquises, and others, lived there as servants of the monks, fulfilling the office of cook, or baker, or swine-herd, or cattle-herd, on the mountains; innumerable nobles thinking that they had lost whatever they did not give to the poor of Christ. King Henry III., who received the Franciscans on their first coming to England, not only gave funds for building their convent at Oxford where he then resided, but also put his own hand to the work; and many great men, laying aside their grandeur, served the masons with stones and mortar with a surprising humility†." There were besides bonds of connexion supplied by the third orders which united the highest classes of society with the monastic world. Thus, at the court of Spain at one time the number of illustrious persons who were members of the third order of St. Francis, in Madrid amounted to six hundred. In fine, it was in monasteries that occurred many historical events that can hardly be recalled to mind without a sense arising of the wisdom, and holiness, and moral grandeur of Catholicism. Here, too, died many kings and illustrious strangers, who either sought for their last moments the peace and edification which a cloister yielded, or whose presence there at their death was only the consequence of their general custom through life of frequenting places favourable to religious impressions. "Henry III., returning from Norwich to London, stopped," says Mathew Paris, "at the abbey of St. Edmond, when he was seized with his mortal sickness. Many counts and barons and prelates came to assist at his last moments; he made his confession most humbly, striking his breast, and abjuring all resentment against every one, and desiring to do penance for his sins. Then, after receiving the sacraments, he embraced the crucifix, and ordered that his debts should be paid, and that the poor should have the rest. So he rendered his soul to God. Little skilled in secular affairs," continues this historian, "he had great merit in the eyes of the Lord by the ardour of his devotion; for every day he was accustomed to hear three masses in plain chant; and when the priest was at the elevation the king used to hold his hand and kiss it‡."

* Hieron. Blanca Argonens. Rer. Comment., 237.

† Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, 23.

‡ Ad ann. 1275.

It may be remarked, by the way, here, that the identity of the feelings and dispositions of many men in ancient and modern times, in regard to the advantage yielded by monasteries, is significative of the truth of a religion whose institutions seem to suit human nature equally well in all ages of the world. Time is continually on the move, and as Goëthe, who was not fond of innovation, says, "Human affairs change their aspect every fifty years, so that an institution which was perfect in 1800 may be a great nuisance in 1850;" but at the present day, wherever one of these religious houses exists, it is found to yield to an immense number of persons forming and visiting it, precisely the same resources which were drawn from a similar establishment a thousand years ago.

"Ay, thus it was one thousand years ago.
One thousand years! Is it then possible
To look so plainly through them? to dispel
A thousand years with backward glance sublime?
To breathe away, as 'twere, all scummy slime
From off a crystal pool, to see its deep,
And one's own image from the bottom peep?"

Yes, it is so here. Now it can hardly be a falsehood or an error that has produced an institution which is found in the nineteenth age of Christianity to yield exactly the same spiritual, moral, and social resources to persons of the highest wisdom and virtue that it did to the mediæval generations, to the citizens of the Roman empire, to the refined and profoundly intellectual society of the seventeenth century, or, in brief, to the greatest and best in every age from the days of the Apostles. Certainly it is very remarkable to find that what a great writer observes of the pleasure we derive from the best books is true in regard to these institutions; for they also impress us ever with the conviction that one nature and one religion presided at their composition, while the same nature and the same religion, as it were, read them. Catholics of the present day enter these buildings, however ancient, with a most modern joy—with a pleasure which is in great part caused by the abstraction of all time from their application. There is some awe mixed with the pleasure of our surprise, when this monk or architect, who lived in some past world sixteen hundred years ago, speaks as it were in stone that which lies close to the souls of Christians now living, and that which he would speak to-morrow. But for the evidence thence afforded to the theological doctrine of the identity of all Catholic faith, we should suppose some pre-established harmony, some foresight of souls that were to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the

fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young they shall never see.

But to return to history. Monasteries and convents, down to the latest times, having been visited by kings and queens, and historical personages, in their prosperous and adverse fortune, supplied many occasions for observing and comparing characters in high station. "We have had five queens here whom I remember very well," says the abbess of Moulins, on occasion of the visit of the queen of James II.; "but not one comparable to this. Every one is equally charmed and edified by her." This connexion between monasteries and thrones, and between monks and the world, explains the advantage, in regard to historical studies, which can be drawn from the monastic traditions, which of course supply direct signals in abundance pointing to the centre. Nearly every religious house had information of this kind. Historic or great literary names, "deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions, majesties, sovereign voices, agonies, creations, and destroyings,"—all had left some trace or other there. Thus the Panegyris Otdonum, or panegyric of the Otho's, by Hrovita, the nun of the tenth century, was composed, as she avows, not from any written documents, but from oral and confidential reports which had reached her within the solitary cloister of Gandersheim; her object being to preserve the memory of the virtues of the three heroes of the ducal and imperial family of Saxony. If any one had desired to write the history of Don Carlos, son of John, king of Arragon, whose calamities were so unmerited, he would have to repair to the Benedictine abbey near Messina, where that unfortunate prince spent the greater portion of his time, resuming in the society of those learned and holy men the studies that had charmed his youth. Zurita, who visited the monastery nearly a century after his death, found the monks possessed of many traditionary anecdotes respecting him during his seclusion among them. But it is not in biography alone that the archives of such houses are rich. "The history of the German empire," says an old historian, "would be sadly interrupted if it were not for the records of monasteries. Genealogy and geography, the foundations of history, borrow from them more than can be expressed. One need not wonder, therefore, if we devote so much care to investigate the monastic antiquities*. Nor should we neglect to observe the importance, in an historical point of view, of the traditions of the monks respecting their own founders, and the holy or remarkable personages that were especially connected with their respective houses. When one hears Benedictine monks, on the evening of St. Scholastica, singing the

* Thuringia Sacra, Prefatio.

words which the saint uttered, and, as it were, saluting her, one feels moved at the unwearied constancy with which these families preserve a memory of all that is associated with the lives and actions of their ancestors. Enter this convent with the stranger on the 17th of September. Behold the kneeling crowds and the lighted altar beneath an image of St. Francis stigmatized, nothing else being visible in the dark shades of evening. Does it not seem as if the seraphic father is still present in the midst of his family? Certainly were he to appear in person suddenly amongst them, and to address them from these steps, he would find them all well acquainted with himself and with his previous instructions. Sometimes the ritual in particular monasteries commemorated an event in their history. Thus Pope Gregory X., sending two nuncios to carry the cardinal's hat to St. Bonaventura, who found him in the convent of the wood of Mugel, four leagues from Florence, the conversation which ensued, and the joy of the community, having caused them to forget the usual hour of complins, in memory of that delay complins are ever afterwards sung in that convent at nightfall, after the bell for the Angelus, which elsewhere is always tolled after the office. In some monasteries proses relative to the saint, whose history is woven up with that of the house, were sung. In the abbey of Murbach, on the feast of St. Leger, his praise was commemorated in honour of God in a sequence which began—

“ Sanctam præsentis diei solemnitatem
In laudibus æterni Creatoris
Fideliter ducamus,
Illiusque athlete fortissimi
Præconii pariter.”

Frequently the manuscripts in a monastery had been actually written by some of its earliest inhabitants, the very name of whose country perhaps had changed since their time; as in the old histories the Irish are called Scotch*. In the abbey of Monte Cassino there is a manuscript in Langobard characters, entitled “*Liber Sententiarum Bruui*,” which Dom Gattula believes to have been written during the lifetime of this Saint Bruno, who was abbot of that house†. The order of the Holy Trinity boasts that St. Francis, when in Spain, was received to hospitality in their convent of Herda; and though there is no mention of this in his history, the constant tradition of that house is deemed sufficient to establish the fact. The order even took care to have the event recorded on a marble slab placed on a column in that convent, in which are these lines:

* Yepes, ii. 339.

† Hist. Abb. Cass. vii. 300

"Hic Barchinona rediens, pater ille Minorum
 Sanctus Franciscus venit, hospitioque receptus
 Una cum paucis sociis comitantibus illum *."

Old pictures, too, preserved in monasteries, possessed a certain historical value, as attesting the domestic traditions of the houses in which they were placed. In the convent of Mount Alvernia was preserved a picture of Brother Agnellus of Pisa receiving from St. Francis, and holding in his expanded hands, his letters patent, written in large letters as follows: "Ego Frater Franciscus de Assisio, minister generalis, præcipio tibi Fratri Agnello de Pisa per obedientiam, ut vadas in Angliam, et ibi facias officium Ministeriatus. Vale. Anno 1219†." The very alms of the monks had sometimes an historical significance, preserving the names of many who, without them, had died to all men's thoughts. Thus, in memory of Louis the Pious, the husband of St. Elizabeth, Dytherus, abbot of Reinhardtsborn, with the consent of the community, gave certain lands and a sum of money in order that on the anniversary of the said prince for ever, one hundred talents of denarii should be given in bread and meat to all the poor who should come on that day to the abbey‡. The commemoration of benefactors alone comprised often a mine of curious history. "In the great Benedictine monastery of Valleroletan," says Yepes, "they have a book called 'Of Benefactors,' in which are recited the names of all persons who conferred benefit on the house, which book, at stated times, is read aloud, lest the monks should lose the memory of them." To such monuments we owe our acquaintance with many men sprung from poor but ancient houses, known to their contemporaries in poetry and in arms. On the other hand, a book like that chronicle of the persecutions of the abbey of Monte Cassino, by the Abbot John I., would contain a history of nearly all the civil and military affairs of the time; for, in fact, the calamities of each religious house were associated with most of the great contemporary events in which the interests of the whole country were involved. In general, every circumstance of the time, connected with public men, though it were only such as the abbot of Cluny, Hugues, having reconciled the Emperor Henry the Black with the monks of Payerne, used to be handed down traditionally in religious houses. To such sources of information even the monastic writers themselves refer. Thus we read, "Mathew Paris, monk of St. Albans, instructed by the recitals of Richard de Witz, and by those of Master Roger Bacon, the friar, has written the life of St. Edmond, carefully putting down what he had learned from

* Baron, *Annales Ord. S. Trin.* p. 43.

† *Collect. Anglo-Min.* 6.

‡ *Thuringia Sacra*, 160.

credible witnesses ; and he who desires to know the book will find it in the church of St. Alban*." Many secular writers mention that their knowledge of certain events has been obtained in monasteries. Vasari acknowledges, that when occupied with his great work on the lives of the painters, he should not have been able to acquire all the information which he has reproduced concerning them if the great kindness of learned monks had not been brought to aid him. Cousin, in his "Studies on the Illustrious Women and the Society of the Seventeenth Century," desiring to throw new light on the relations of Madame de Longueville with the world, and with great persons who had retired from it, has lately addressed himself to the poor Carmelites of St. Jacques, who possessed the traditions of their order respecting her ; and there he says, where he least expected, he has discovered what he had in vain sought for in national archives and public libraries†. Every English reader will remember that, similarly, Miss Strickland, in composing her life of Mary Beatrice of Modena, the wife of James II., acknowledges how much she was indebted to the inedited fragment of the diary of a nun of Chaillot, by whom many of the incidents in the early life of that virtuous queen were recorded as they came from her own lips.

Here, without digressing far, one may remark the value of the monastic sources of historical knowledge. Throughout Europe the facts of early Christian history had been transmitted by means of them, and it was not till comparatively modern times that a certain family of critics arose, who undertook to throw discredit on their authenticity ; but, as a late learned writer says, "Experience proved that the boldest critics were not always those who had studied to the bottom the subject on which they treated." Launoy repeated over and over again that the traditions of Provence, preserved in monasteries, as also in the popular memory, were imagined after the year 1000, before which year, he said, no one had ever mentioned them. These assertions were less the expression of a conviction acquired by long and conscientious research, than the consequence of a system already adopted by him, and which he was resolved to defend at any cost. The dispute was beginning ; he had not had time to search for proof, and he fancied that it did not exist. "He had but two arguments," says Father Pagi, "the one founded on the supposed absence of ancient documents, the other on the assumed falsehood of whatever was opposed to him‡." The critics who followed, notwithstanding

* Ad ann. 1253.

† M^{me.} de Longueville, p. i. c. 63.

‡ Monuments sur l'Apostolat. de Ste. M. Madeleine en Provence, 391.

their pretensions to originality and their real erudition, did only servilely follow whatever he had advanced. Even Baillet, Chate-lain, and Papebroc followed him step by step. The canons of Autun entered so fully into his views that, after changing the office of St. Lazarus, wishing to abolish every trace of the tradition of their fathers, they effaced in their church all the ancient sculpture which represented him in the habit of a bishop, and even destroyed his marble tomb, one of the grandest works of art of the twelfth century*. But, since their folly has been demonstrated, had they and those who succeeded till lately paid more regard to the monastic traditions co-existing with the popular belief through previous ages, they would not have verified in themselves the proverb, that "proud lips must swallow bitter potions."

But, without remaining longer here, let us proceed to contemplate the avenue supplied by discovering the motives which led to the foundation and enrichment of monasteries, and the causes from which they generally arose; for when we have pushed aside, as it were, the boughs obstructing this issue, by showing the antiquity of the documents which attest them, we shall find that there is a very direct passage from this point to the centre; and, moreover, an old monastic poet assures us, that the history itself which relates them may be productive of the best results.

"Quis Cartusiaci jecit fundamina primum
Ordinis et quæ causa illi, vis nosse viator?
Historiam hanc sequere, hos etiam tu perlege versus;
Fructum si quæras, aderit compunctio sancta†."

If we consult the archives of monasteries, and read the diplomas and charters preserved from the time of their foundation, we shall find that, in many instances, they warrant our concluding that the men who built, favoured, and enriched such houses were actuated by motives which, more or less, attest the truth of the religion professed by them; for these sacred asylums, we shall find, were built and founded either through natural affection and love in all its tenderness and spirituality, which is one result of truth, or through a desire of atoning rationally as well as religiously for past offences, in obedience to the letter and spirit of the Holy Scriptures; or through a wish generally to do good to mankind, which it is to be supposed is a great mark of true religion; or through the love of our Saviour, with a view to the welfare of the soul, and through the hope of heaven formally expressed, as the ultimate, supreme object of the heart's desire.

* Monuments sur l'Apostolat. de Ste. M. Madeleine en Provence, 355.

† V. Vincentinus Carthus. de Origine S. Carthus. Ordinis.

The documents in which these motives are expressed prove curious in every point of view; and though at the risk of fatiguing some who accompany us, we must remain here awhile to unroll them, and show that the above assertions are not rashly made, since they are borne out by records of which the authenticity in general is undisputed. And first, as to attesting that natural affection, sanctified and spiritually directed, gave rise sometimes to such institutions, we have instances of the following kind, which must interest the reader, as in truth, however simply told, the facts are affecting. Lütold of Regensburg then, we read, founded the monastery of Fahr, on the river Limmat, building it on the very spot where the body of his son, who had been drowned, was picked up*. Another example is thus related: Two young sons of Hugh, count of Montfort, as many hopes hanging on their noble heads as blossoms on a bough in May, and sweet ones, bathed one day in the Lauchart, near the Suabian Alps. After swimming, the two brothers threw themselves on a hay-rick, and fell fast asleep. Soon afterwards some fresh hay was brought up, and unintentionally thrown over the boys, so as to cover and overwhelm them both. Their disappearance caused dismay and poignant grief. The river was searched, but all in vain. The desolate parents in their bitter affliction turned to religion for comfort, and vowed to build a monastery as soon as their children were found either dead or alive. In the spring, when the hay was taken down to be fetched away, the dead bodies of the two poor boys were discovered under it. In discharge of the vow, the count built, in 1265, the convent of Mariaberg, not far from Trochtelzingen. Another remarkable instance is that of the daughters of Bertulphe, the husband of St. Godeliebe, by a different wife, founding a convent of Benedictines on the site of the house which Godeliebe inhabited, which monastery was called by her name. Again, in the same category may be placed the singular fact which is related respecting the origin of Cloister Neuburg. Leopold and his wife Agnes, while meditating on the project of founding a monastery, in which the praises of Christ and of his blessed Mother might be for ever sung, happened one day to be seated at a window of the castle, on the lofty steep of Cecio, under which the Danube flows. At that moment a sudden gust of wind carried off from the head of Agnes the veil which she had worn at her marriage, and bore it to the adjoining wood on the river's bank. Nine years afterwards this veil was found uninjured among some bushes by the marquis, as he was hunting in the forest. Surprised at discovering it thus, he carried it joyfully to his wife, saying that it seemed to him as if the spot in which he found it must

have been designed by God for their foundation, and there accordingly they built that vast and beautiful monastery*.

The woman of the middle ages, with all her piety, was a real woman still, playing woman's part, as Shakspeare paints her, and with sweet speech bidding man raise

“His drooping head, and clear his soul of doubt,
For that she was a woman, and without
Any more subtle fluid in her veins
Than throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains
Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his.”

Therefore had they husbands like young lovers at their feet,

“With no more awe than what their beauty gave,
That, while it smote, still guaranteed to save.”

In general we may remark that all those foundations for the benefit of the souls of parents, and sons, and daughters, of husbands and wives, of friends and betrothed lovers, and benefactors, yielding proof of such true and lasting affection, are made also “*pro amore omnipotentis Dei* ;” and through the compunction of grace, “*divina inspiratione compunctus*.” Among the same class of founders might be placed also, no doubt, many who had been guided to the road of retreat by love—human love frustrated of its immediate object, first and passionate love, “that which stands alone in sweetness, like Adam's recollection of the state he fell from.” One should dwell on this consideration as often as it presents itself; for it shows how Catholicism has resources for the bitterest wound to which our flesh is heir. Yes, it was love that often raised such walls. “What is love? and why,” asks a modern author, “is it the chief good, but because it is an overpowering enthusiasm? Never self-possessed or prudent, it is all abandonment. Is it not a certain admirable wisdom, preferable to all other advantages, and whereof all others are only secondaries and indemnities, because this is that in which the individual is no longer his own foolish master, but one who inhales an odorous and celestial air? It is wrapt round with awe of the object, blending for the time that object with the real and only good. When we speak truly, is not he only unhappy who is not in love? his fancied freedom and self-rule, is it not so much death? He who is in love is wise, and is becoming wiser; seeth newly every time he looks at the object beloved, drawing from it, with his eyes and his mind, those virtues which it possesses. Therefore if the object be removed, ceasing to be itself an expanding soul, he presently exhausts it.

* Raderus, *Bavaria Sancta*, t. iii. 150.

But the love remains in his mind, and the wisdom it brought him; and it craves a new and higher object. And the reason why all men honour love is because it looks up and not down; aspires and not despairs." The spirit of many of these founders was love,—a love passed into the impersonal, a love of the flower and perfection of things, a love of one dearer to them than life, whom they sought to benefit, and a love of God, whom they wished to adore. As far as this world was concerned, they had nothing left but a sigh, which is but the most unhappy piece of life, so they resolved ever after to worship sadness, apply themselves to grief, prepare and build altars to sorrow.

Another motive which led to such foundations was remorse for past offences, and a desire of giving proof of its sincerity. Mary of Brabant, daughter of Henry the Magnanimous, and wife of Louis the Severe, count palatine of the Rhine, was put to death by her husband through jealousy and the error of the messenger. Subsequently the prince, in expiation, and for the sake of her soul, founded the great Cistercian monastery of Furstenfeld, which is situated between Augsburg and Munich. On that house was placed this inscription:—

"AD HOSPITES.

Conjugis innocuæ fusi monumenta cruoris
Pro culpa pretium claustra sacrata vides *."

The Cistercian monastery of Georgenthal, in Thuringia, in like manner, was a monument of repentance. Everard, count of Marca, and Adolf his brother, served the duke of Limburg in his wars against the duke of Brabant. Through compunction for the blood that was shed in battle, Everard resolved to retire to a remote solitude; and there, abdicating all the splendour of his ancient race, he devoted himself to tend swine, till he was discovered by the abbot of Morimond, who some time after sent him to be the first abbot of Georgenthal, which was founded by his brother Adolf, who formed it out of the castle of Altenberg, having selected the spot on the mountain of St. George as a place of horror and vast solitude†. These facts, so interesting in themselves, are in general drily related in the old chronicles. It will be more satisfactory, perhaps, to hear these founders declare their motive with their own lips. In these writings, in which the true "form and pressure" of the ages which produced them are completely preserved, the real springs of many actions are disclosed, with the conscience of individuals and the general temper of society. Their perusal is almost like a revocation of their authors from the dead, to abide

* Raderus, *Bavaria Sancta*, t. ii. 300.

† *Thuringia Sacra*, 412.

our questioning, and to act over again before us, in the very dress and accents of the time, a portion of the scenes which they once guided.

Lupus, then, duke of Spoleto, and the Lady Hermelinda, founding the monastery of St. George the Martyr, near the walls of the city of Reati, introduce their charter with these words: "The almighty and merciful God gives to us remedies for purging sins, saying, '*Sicut rogus exstinguitur latices, ita eleemosyna sæva purgantur peccata* *,'" thus with precision combining the idea of divine mercy with all actions performed by grace to make amends for sin committed. Again, in 1023, this record is left: "We, Peter and Giso, sons of Cabbisus, declare to this effect,—that because sickness hath come upon us, and we see danger of our death, we have thought on the death of death and the eternal judgment; and therefore, reminded of the mercy of Almighty God, we give and grant for the benefit of our souls such and such things to the abbey of Monte Cassino †." The testament of Geoffroy Boucicaut, seigneur de Bourbon, and chamberlain of Charles VI., respecting his grants to the monastery of the Sainte-Baume, begins thus: "Since the multiplied mercy of God provides by various modes of penance remedies for the human race, it hath not denied this one laudable consolation for all: that every man, living in this valley of tears, and considering in his mind his own wickedness, may, by a just balance, dispense his property and fulfil the Scripture, saying, '*Sicut aqua exstinguit ignem, ita eleemosyna exstinguit peccatum*;' and it is said in the Gospel, '*Quicumque dederit calicem aquæ frigidæ tantum in nomine meo, non perdet mercedem suam*.' Therefore let all know that Gouffridus, called Boucicaut, &c. &c., adhuc ætate florens, and seeing daily the judgment of God in least as in greatest things, and the ruin of the present world, and fearing diem tenebrarum et caliginis, in order that our Lord Jesus Christ may be propitious to him, and the blessed Virgin and all the saints interceders for him; considering also, '*quod licet omnia tempus habeant sub sole, suis tamen spatiis transeunt universa*,' for the soul of his noble and deceased wife, and for the souls of his parents, friends, and benefactors, and for a remedy for his own soul, founds this chaplaincy in the Sainte-Baume, remembering also what is said, that '*qui parce seminat parce et metet, et qui seminat in benedictionibus de benedictionibus et metet vitam æternam* ‡." Here is another instance from the archives of Monte Cassino: "I,

* Ap. Mab. Museum Italicum.

† Hist. Abb. Cassinensis. vi. 323.

‡ Monuments inédits sur l'Apostolat, de Ste. M. Mad. en Provence, tom. ii. p. 1061.

Landolf, son of Pandolf, prince of Capua, having lost my father and brothers, began, by the inspiration of God, to take in mind and tremblingly to consider how frail is this life, and how suddenly it comes to an end, verifying our Lord's words, '*Quid prodest homini si lucretur universum mundum?*' and the Apostle's saying, '*Dum tempus habemus, operemur quod bonum est;*' moreover, terrified by the fear of future punishment, in order that we and our father and our brothers may escape it, and obtain eternal joys, we have resolved to give," &c.* These founders seem to have that delicacy of conscience which Hamlet betrays when saying, "I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious; with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in." They would make provision at least for others to lead a better life between earth and heaven. In the same archives, under the date of 993, we read as follows: "I, Guido, count of this city of Pontecurbi, son of Count Adenolf, of good memory, oppressed with many crimes, began to consider how and by what means I might take them into consideration with profit, and that the merciful Omnipotent might succour me, and that I might fly from his wrath. Thinking thus, and, as I suspect, He Himself being present with me, and putting it into my heart that I might build a monastery, and according to his good pleasure, a certain spiritual man was directed to go before my face, by whose direction, in a vast desert which pertained to me, I have proposed to build a monastery †."

By an easy transition we pass from this motive to another, which indeed must be taken into account in order to understand the preceding examples, and avoid a mistake too frequently made respecting them. We must observe, then, that monasteries were built also through an immediate primary desire of doing good in general to mankind, as no work was thought more conducive to both temporal and eternal, to social and religious interests. Hence, the motive is often simply expressed as the desire of giving alms; for by that term all kinds of good works, corporal and spiritual, were signified. So we find documents of the following kind: "I, Ucbert, son of Leo, and Amatús, count of Campania, offerimus et tradidimus, nulla nos cogente, neque contradicente vel suadente, aut vim faciente sed propria exoptanea nostra bona voluntate in monasterio b. Benedicti ‡." The diploma of Henry, landgrave of Thuringia and count palatine of Saxony, giving lands to the monastery of

* Hist. Cassinens. Sæc. iii. 43.

† D. Gattula, Hist. Cassinens. vi. 293.

‡ Id. viii. 497.

Reinhardsborn, takes for granted the same combination of good works, in the act of succouring such houses. "Since," it says in the beginning, "we are so oppressed with the weight of secular business, that we may repeat the complaint of the Psalmist, saying, 'Adhæsit in terra venter noster,' it is necessary that we should endeavour to rise by giving alms, and obtaining eternal in exchange for transitory things. Therefore," &c.* The charter of Albert, landgrave of Thuringia and count palatine of Saxony, giving lands to the same monastery, in 1272, begins thus: "Omnibus in perpetuum. Since the load of secular affairs sinks us down to such a degree, that, with grief we say it, rarely or never are we able to raise the eyes of our mind to supernal things, it is necessary that, by the distribution of alms, with the Lord's inspiration, we may at length rise to the attainment of eternal in exchange for transitory things. Therefore," &c.†

The hospice attached to monasteries formed part of the foundation, and so at Monte Cassino is found the charter of Count Manerius de Pallearia, who in the year 1198 writes as follows: "Since as from the one fountain of Paradise four great rivers flowed, and from the one ark of the Saviour four chief virtues emanate, which water the hearts of the faithful, amongst which the greatest of all is charity, by which they effect their return to the Saviour, and provide mercy for themselves,—for we shall all stand before the tribunal of Christ, to render an account of all that we have done in this miserable life, whether evil or good,—therefore, while we are in this depraved life we ought to do good, and among other works of piety the merciful Lord commends works of hospitality, saying, 'Hospes fui, et suscepistis me;' and again, 'Date eleemosynam, et omnia munda sunt vobis.' Therefore the common gifts of our Creator, granted to us mercifully, ought to be communicated by us to the indigent, to the poor of Christ, as his members; for what we do to them we do to our Lord; and so, by the worthy use of temporal things, we may attain to the plenitude of eternal joys. Therefore I, Manerius, by the grace of God count of Manupelli, desiring by the divine inspiration to give my mite, in order to be separated from the reprobate, and to associate perpetually with the holy elect of God, for my own and my parents' salvation, desire to build a hospice on the mountain of the abbey, with the Lord's assistance, for the reception of the poor, and of other faithful, which is to be so free, that neither we nor our heirs shall have any power whatever over it‡." Similarly, Carolus Kopec, a Polish palatine, founding a Benedictine abbey in Li-

* Thuringia Sacra, 109.

† Id. 121.

‡ Sec. iv. 84.

thuania, in his diploma says, "Desiring in the days of the peregrination of my life to treasure up for myself the unfailing treasure of the heavenly country, while as yet He calls, and means by the divine mercy are afforded of sacrificing voluntary holocausts to the Author of all good—*voluntaria sacrificandi holocausta Authori omnium bonorum* *," &c.

The construction of a monastery was so excellent a work, in the general estimation, that parties before divided would unite in effecting it. The origin of the convent of Altenberg, in the time of the Emperor Frederick I., is an instance. When, during the reign of the Emperor Arnulph, the Huns from Scythia invaded Europe, the terrified population fortified this mountain, which was then wild and desert and wooded. After these invasions the mountain ceased to be occupied as a place of defence, and was given up to the feeding of cattle. Again it grew wild, and no one lived upon it. In process of time, however, the two neighbouring towns of Biehl and Dalheim began to contend about its possession; and as this contest became very serious, a certain priest, named Godefried, who was greatly revered for the sanctity of his life and the force of his preaching, happened to pass by, and by the unanimous consent of the two towns he was chosen arbitrator between them. He, having examined the mountain, and seen that it was of little value, desired them to give it for the site of a monastery, which he undertook to construct; to which proposition they consented, and giving up the ground to him, the convent of Præmonstratensians of Altenberg was the result †. In fact, it was society, and not any particular man or order that was benefited by such donations; for things which are consecrated, having become religious or sacred, are the property of no one—*res nullius*.

Again, we find proof, on consulting the ancient archives, that, in founding monasteries, men professed that they were actuated by a love of Jesus Christ, and a desire of honouring God. Gratitude for personal favours entered sometimes into this motive, as when monasteries were founded after escape from great dangers. Thus, the Cistercian monastery called New Abbey, at East Smithfield and Tower-hill, was founded by King Edward III., in 1359, in fulfilment of a vow made in a tempest on the sea, and peril of drowning, if God would grant him grace to come safe to land. Henry II., duc de Longueville, playing at tennis, in the 20th year of his age, strained one of his shoulders so that it remained higher than the other. All surgical skill had failed in attempts to restore it to its proper place. His afflicted mother, Catherine de Gonzagues, addressed herself to sister Mary of the Incarnation. This holy Carmelite prayed before the blessed sacra-

* Hist. Cassinens. xii. 787.

† Thuringia Sacra, 296.

ment, and the next day the young duke recovered his shape. Through gratitude, the mother and son founded the convent of the Rue Chapon, endowing it with 10,000 silver crowns, and 2000 pounds a year*. Frequently, however, without any reference to a personal and temporal benefit, the motive for such foundations is expressed as a love of the Saviour, and from a consideration of his goodness in the redemption of the world. Mark the words of Duke Robert, and his wife Sikelgaita, and his son Roger, in the charter to Monte Cassino: "Believing that we shall receive recompense from God, the Creator of all, if we extend care and solicitude to holy and venerable places, and that what we ask from those worshipping in the same holy places, to the best of our ability we should fulfil, being moved by the fear and love of Him, qui filium suum pro nobis fecit carnem sumere et patibulum crucis subire, et mortem gustare ut nos morte sua perque cooperationem spiritus sancti a morte perpetua liberaret nobisque vitam tribueret sempiternam, we grant to the monastery of St. Benedict, of Monte Cassino," &c.† Again, in 1268, Alphonso, son of the king of France, count of Poitiers and of Tholouse, begins his letters of privilege to the order of the Trinity with these words: "This nobility lays down, that what it gives spontaneously it thinks it owes of obligation, and it esteems nothing that it does in the way of benefits as great, especially in the offerings which it makes to the churches, in which the best measure is immensity—optima mensura est immensitas. But when Christ sees offerings to be made to the glory of his name, He gives so much the more abundantly as He beholds the dignity of religion to be augmented. Therefore," &c.‡ Similarly it is to obey Christ that Bareson, king of Sardinia, grants his charter to Monte Cassino; for his words are, "To those laden with the burden of sins it is found a principal remedy that they should hasten to give their temporal substance to the poor of Christ, the Lord Himself saying, 'Date eleemosynam, et ecce, omnia munda sunt vobis;' and again, 'Facite vobis amicos de Mammona iniquitatis ut cum defeceritis recipiant vos in aeterna tabernacula.' Therefore, hearing this voice, I, Bareson, following as far as I can the pious footsteps of my father, my wife Algaburga consenting, give and grant," &c.§ Here is another, of the date of 1341: "We, Adenulf de Blasius, judge and notary, make known that, in our presence, Raynaldus, the son of Garofanus, for the remission of his sins, and proposing to serve God with a true heart and mind, and to make temporal subservient to spiritual things, since the divine page

* Cousin, Mdme. de Longueville, p. i. c. l.

† Hist. Cass. i. 183.

‡ Baron, Annales Ord. SS. Trin. 237.

§ D. Gatt. Hist. Abb. Cassinens. 266.

testifies, 'Omnia sunt transitoria, præter amare et diligere Deum ac Virginem Mariam,' with a free and spontaneous will, gives purely, simply, and irrevocably to the monastery," &c.* So also Gerard, canon of Reims, son of the great knight Arnulph de Ruminac, founded the monastery of Florins, where the children of Sion should rejoice in their King, and praise his name in the choir, while their sacred relics rest under the altars; "for monasteries," adds the diploma, "are towers erected in Sion, where the wonders of God may be declared, and his name adored from generation to generation †." Duke Robert Guiscard and his wife Sicelgaita speak as follows in the beginning of his donation to the infirmary of the monks: "If in a due order we attend to the divine worship, and to the honour and utility of the holy Church, we ought with all devotion to extend the greatest care and consolation to the holy Church of God, that the supernatural piety may so much the more graciously protect us as we more fervently endeavour to exalt as far as we can, and protect his Church. Therefore, through the love of Almighty God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of his holy Mother, the Virgin Mary, and of blessed Benedict, and for the salvation of our soul, and of the souls of all our relations, and also through the intervention of our beloved wife, we grant," &c.‡ In accordance with such motives, the foundation on which monasteries are placed expressly by the charter of their founders is Christ. So the diploma of foundation of the monastery of St. Maria in the country of Friuli, in the year 662, begins thus: "Having resolved to found a monastery by means of which we may increase in the study of God, and propose examples of life to others, we must seek a beginning from the foundation of all good, which the Apostle explains, saying, 'Fundamentum aliud nemo potest ponere præter id quod positum est, quod est Christus §.'" Founders being thus actuated by the motive of love for our Lord, we shall discover without surprise that monasteries were built and enriched also in consideration of the holiness attached to particular orders or men. The historian of the Cistercians declares expressly that it was in consequence of their eminent sanctity that in a short time about 1800 monasteries of men, and 1040 of nuns of that order were constructed ||. Each benefactor seemed to say with Guido of Duca,

"But since God's will is that so largely shine
His grace in thee, I will be liberal too ¶."

So Margaret, queen of Naples, in her privilege to the monas-

* D. Gatt. Hist. Abb. Cassinens. x. 624.

† Triumphus S. Joan. Bapt. 183.

‡ Hist. Cassinens. vi. 276.

§ S. Paul. Aquil. Op. Appendix ii.

|| Aubertus Miræus, Chron. Cisterciens.

¶ Purg. 14.

tery of St. Anne of Aquavira, of Mount Dragon, says that she wishes "to support those who, for the salvation of the human race—*qui pro salute humani generis*—continually labour and watch in prayers with God, and considering that this is a stable and firm possession which any one raises for himself by conferring benefits and favours on the churches*." "At Meinvelt, in the diocese of Treves," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, "is a monastery of a Black order, called Lake, having its name from the adjoining water, a house very rich and flourishing. One day, a certain Saxon was received there to hospitality, who departed much edified by the charity with which he had been received. Not long after, a rich friend of his in Saxony, being at the point of death, and about to write his will in his presence, said, 'I wish to bequeath somewhat for my soul, if I knew in what place it would be best applied.' To whom he said, 'Near Cologne is a monastery of great religion, in which, as I can testify from experience, there are men of God most charitable. You cannot leave your alms to a more worthy place.' By his advice the Saxon bequeathed forty marks of silver to them, and died. This was told me by a certain religious convert of our order†."

Again, we find that monasteries were built and enriched with a view to the good of the soul, and through a desire and love of spiritual riches. Henry VI., offering to build several convents for the Observants, in order to prevail upon St. John Capistran, then vicar-general, to come over to England, that holy man in his reply wrote as follows: "Moreover, concerning the building of new monasteries to the honour of God and the memory of St. Bernardine of Sienna, I add no more, but that, as I have said, faith without good works is not available. Wherefore, if you pleased to build the said monasteries, I would have you to know that you build not for me nor for others, but for yourself, so many everlasting palaces in heaven; for our days are short, and in a little space of time death cuts us off from all that is here below, and we poor wretches carry nothing away with us but the virtues and vices, the good or evil, which we have acted in this life. If, therefore, your majesty intends to provide for your soul by building the said monasteries for the Observants, I will write to the most reverend father vicar of France, and to some guardian in the neighbourhood, with whom you may consult in this affair‡."

But let us again open the diplomas, and simply transcribe them. They are written, it must be confessed, in stunning Latin, but the sense is sufficiently intelligible. What first follows is dated in 1018. "I, John Giso, and Cono, 'espontanea

* Hist. Cassinens. x. 619.

† iv. 71.

‡ Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, 203.

nostra bona voluntate,' having thought of the day of death and eternal judgment, and remembering the mercy of Almighty God, for the redemption and salvation of our souls, that the pious and merciful Lord may grant us indulgence for our sins, and that eternal light may encompass us in the future life, by this charter give and grant to the Church of St. Angelo *," &c. Again, in 1078: "I, Dauferus, and I, Altruda, his wife, inhabiting the city of Troja, being moved by the mercy of Almighty God, have thought within ourselves, 'ut quid prodest homini si totum mundum lucretur anima ejus detrimentum paciatur,' and elsewhere what the Scripture saith, 'in omni opere tuo memorare novissima tua, et in eternum non peccaberis;' and again what it says, 'mensura quam mensi fueritis remecietur vobis;' therefore, for the remedy of our souls, in order that we may obtain rest with the most high Lord, and dwell with him, we give †," &c. Again, in 1087: "I, Herbius de Johex, born in Brittain, and now living in the city of Troja, whilst I assiduously reflected on these present things, which would be nothing to a mortal man, I foresaw those things existing which avail to the salvation of the soul, and chose rather to embrace the latter than the former; for nothing transitory can be compared to what endures for ever—"Nil enim transitorium comparabitur permanenti," nothing mortal can equal what is immortal; since also, I remember that which Truth declares in the Gospel, saying, 'Nihil proficuum esset animæ lucrum hujus seculi unde anima perimitur;' on account of this, I and my wife, the daughter of Landulf, agree to give ‡," &c. Again in 1057: "I, John, the son of Beczo, having in mind the day of my death and eternal judgment, desire and hope, through the great mercy of Almighty God, the redemption of my soul, and that of the soul of my brother Paul, and all my relations, that to us our Lord Jesus Christ may grant pardon, and that he may recal us to his holy grace, and when that future judgment comes, when the Lord will say, 'Venite, benedicti Patris mei,' we may be able to obtain recompense from the Lord. Therefore I deliver up to this holy church §," &c. Take again a fragment of the testament of Dagobert, in which he leaves certain goods to the abbey of St. Vincent, now St. Germain, at Paris; of St. Peter, now St. Geneviève; of St. Denis, of St. Columban, and of St. Lupus, at Sens. "As far," he says, "as the sense of the human understanding can conceive with a sagacious mind, and perpend with acute investigation, there is nothing better in the light of this life, and in the fugitive joy, than that we should study to expend in the support of the poor or venerable places what we derive from transitory

* Hist. Abb. Cassinensis, vi. 321.

† Id. vi. 278.

VOL. VII.

‡ Id. vi. 277.

§ Id. vi. 320.

things, we who suffer generally the fragility of nature, before a sudden transposition takes place, that we should watch for the salvation of our souls, that we may not be found unprepared, or depart from the world without any respect ; but that while we have liberty of action we may transfer things from being perishable substances into eternal tabernacles, so as to obtain perpetual life and a place amidst the desirable assembly of the just. Therefore, moved by these considerations *, &c. A charter of an English king is as follows : “ *Nihil intulimus, ut Apostolicum testatur oraculum in hunc mundum, nec auferre quicquid possumus ; idcirco terrenis ac caducis æterna et mansura mercanda sunt.*” Therefore I, Ethelred, king of the Mercians, for the remedy of my soul, give,” &c. A charter of King Ceadwall begins thus : “ *Omnia quæ videntur temporalia sunt, et quæ non videntur eterna sunt. Idcirco visibilibus invisibilia, et caducis cœlestia præferenda sunt.*” Therefore I, Ceadwall, have resolved to confer certain emoluments on this monastery †.” “ This year, 1258,” says Mathieu Paris, “ the Lord John Mansel, provost of Beverley, clerk and special counsellor of the king, a man prudent, circumspect, and rich, considering that the favour of kings is not hereditary, and that the prosperity of this world does not always last, founded near Romney, two miles from the sea, a house of regular canons, and enriched it, knowing that we only pass through temporal goods, and that by these means we may avoid losing eternal goods.” The donation of Count Richard Fundanus in 1176, to the convent of St. Magnus, begins thus with these words : “ Since we shall all stand before the tribunal of Christ to receive according as every one has done in the body, whether good or evil, we ought to expect the day of final harvest, and to sow those things on earth by which we may gather the fruit of eternal beatitude in heaven. Therefore we, Ricardus ‡,” &c. In fine, we have remarked that monasteries were founded through the desire and the love of heaven. Such is the motive of the Emperor St. Henry in granting a charter to Mount Cassino, which begins with these words : “ It behoves the imperial majesty to hear the petitions of the servants of God, and willingly to grant what they justly seek, through love of the saints, in whose veneration the places are dedicated and in proportion as each one endeavours to do this, so much mercy will he obtain, passing with more facility through present things, and more securely obtaining the eternal happiness §.” The charter of Count Roland of Lucca to Mount Cassino contains these words : “ This we have learned from the authority of

* Ap. Yepes, Chron. Gen. Ord. S. Ben. ii. 469.

† Mon. Vit. S. Aldelmi.

§ Id. i. 120.

‡ Hist. Cass. vi. 260.

the divine law, that I ought in such manner to enjoy this world and the things which are frail and transitory, that we may pass from this wicked world to that glorious and celestial Jerusalem, in the building of which living and perfect stones are bound together by the bonds of the utmost love ; for so, after the dissolution of this flesh, we trust we may have felicity in heaven, and gloriously be united with the society of the saints, if, mindful of the evangelical precepts, we transfer the things of this world thither, where neither moth nor rust will corrupt them, but where they will be preserved for ever in the palace of the supreme King, so that our riches will become of a great and inestimable value, when for temporal we shall gain eternal, for earthly celestial, for mean sublimest things from God who is the giver of all good. Therefore, with a view to the attainment of that good which will remain with us for ever, I, Roland, by this charter, offer to God and to the church*,” &c.

The charter of Boamund expresses the same motive ; for these are its words : “ If we extend care and solicitude and the benefits of my service to holy and venerable places, to their rulers and servants, I hope that I shall obtain the joys of eternal retribution from God the giver of all good,—‘qui filium suum carnem sumere, et patibulum crucis subire mortemque pro nobis gustare fecit.’ Therefore, by these presents I confirm to the monastery of St. Benedict,” &c.† St. Leopold, the son of Leopold the Fair, marquis of Austria, and of Itha, daughter of the Emperor Henry III., founding, as we have seen, Cloister Neuburg, expresses the same motive when giving to it a great part of his patrimony. His charter commences thus : “ In the name of the holy and undivided Trinity, Leopold, Oriental marquis, founder of this church : since, hindered by secular affairs, we are unable to please God to the utmost by ourselves, we wish to love, to congregate, to cherish, and in every manner to provide for the wants of those who enjoy peace exempt from worldly studies ; for, by so doing, not only may we hope for safety in the present life, for peaceable times and all prosperity, but also that we shall not for ever be deprived of the good things which are reserved in heaven. Therefore, I Leopold, with my most noble wife Agnes, with the unanimous consent of all my sons and daughters, and without any contradiction from any mortal whomsoever, with a Davidic devotion and simplicity of heart, joyfully offer all these things to God and to the church of Neuburg,” &c.‡ In fine without even such evidence, it clearly is an historical fact, that monasteries in general were built by

* Hist. Abb. Cassinens. i. 195.

† Id. i. 205.

‡ Ap. Rader. Bavaria Sancta, iii. 148.

the men who were most eminent in their generation for intelligence and virtue. It is not difficult, of course, to point out some examples that seem to argue the contrary; but undoubtedly these were only exceptions, and their very notoriety rather confirms the observation. It was the best, the most popular, the most wise, and the most heroic men who built them. How interesting is it, for instance, to observe Joinville after his return from the crusade, wholly given to piety, founding the Cistercian abbey of Escuray, the Præmonstratensian abbey of Janvillers, the house of God at Mathon of the order of Grandmont, and ordering himself to be buried in the monastery of Clairvaux, where accordingly, in the year 1200, he was entombed*.

Having thus seen, then, what were generally the motives of founders and benefactors, we may follow the index supplied by them with confidence; for the principle of institutions which were produced by such exalted views, such admirable affections, and by such purely virtuous motives, must assuredly have been in accordance with truth. Therefore the road of retreat, passing by monasteries, though as yet we have only followed it but for a short distance, may be seen already to lead towards a recognition of the divine and central character of the ancient religion of Christendom.

Having thus penetrated more into the interior of the tract through which this road leads, it is time for us to remark the issue to the centre presented by a consideration of the characters of monastic life in general, more especially as carried on within its enclosures, and as yet without any reference to the external action which it exercises on others who are without its sphere.

One of the greatest errors of narrow-minded persons seems to be, the opinion that a thing which does not suit their own particular circumstances, and their own individual character, must necessarily be unsuitable to all others. Popular writers, while this page is being written, say, "It is a very common mistake to imagine that others must feel upon a favourite subject as we do ourselves; but it is a very fatal one." "Good and evil, in truth," as Jeffrey says, "change natures with a change of circumstances; and we may be lamenting as the most intolerable of calamities what was never felt as an infliction by those on whom it fell." Those who are formed for a totally different sphere and for another kind of activity, without the desires that some other minds experience, and that different circumstances demand, feel conscious that they would

* Levesque, *Annales Grandimontis*, 445.

be miserable and out of their element in a 'state of life like this, and therefore, instead of asking humbly, with Angelina,—

“ May we not,
Without so strict forsaking of the world,
Be capable of blessing, and meet heaven
At last, though erring nature guide sometime
Out of the nearest way ? ”

which question would assuredly receive an answer that would tranquillize and satisfy them as to their own obligation, they angrily rush to the conclusion that life in a monastery would prove equally wretched and injurious to every one else—“ Thus worldlings ground what they have dreamed upon,” all this being but the blindness of their fancy. Christian antiquity was comparatively free from this error, and thereby proved its discernment ; for, as a living author says, “ The wise man shows his wisdom in separation, in gradation ; and his scale of characters and of merits is as wide as nature. The foolish have no range in their scale, but suppose every man is as every other man.” When, flying to another mode of expressing this dislike, you say monks and nuns are no part of Christianity, you might as reasonably say, that the shopmen of Holborn or the Strand, champions of the Thames or amateur mudlarks, footmen or the elegant and languid forms that glide through the park in coaches, all that pertains to the difference of high, and middle, and low life are no part of it. But you cannot get rid of the want or propensity which leads different persons to embrace some one or other of these conditions. If not the sources, they are the natural development of central principles ; if all are not the Corinthian capitals of society, they all belong in some degree or other to its unavoidable wants, or use, or ornament. Catholicism seems to secure practically the great benefit alluded to by the poet in his line—

“ *Naturæ sequitur semina quisque suæ.* ”

We must not suffer the eloquent rhetoric of some saints giving advice to particular persons whose individual wants were known to them, addressing them in words like those of Jasper to Luce,

“ Come, make your way to heaven, and bid the world,
With all the villainies that stick upon it,
Farewell ! you're for another life.”

I say, we must not suffer these admonitions to make us forget the calm and beautiful appreciation of human life in general, which has ever been found taken within the Church ; for that would be to mistake a part for the whole, and to adopt the silliest ground of prejudice or of egotism. The sages of the cloister, whatever fell under their own eyes, would never sub-

stitute a part for the whole, or judge of things by halves. They never thought that the whole world ought to be a monastery. If you suppose so, you are rude, and by your narrow thoughts proportion theirs. Hamlet, in a fit of sublime indignation at the knavery of the world, would send Ophelia to a nunnery; but the religious man, in giving counsel, is not led by passion or misanthropy; nor is he so prompt to send young maidens thither. It was in the Dominican convent of Rome that a certain number of girls every year received dowers to enable them to marry. Catholicism would have each person do that which he can do best, which he will find out if left to himself. There is nothing in the central principles from which such institutions emanate to stop the current of human life around them, to strip their neighbourhood, if they are in towns, of shopboys or bankers' clerks, of milliners and their patronesses, and of marriageable maidens of a high degree, all of whom may be surrounded with an atmosphere of humour, gaiety, spirit, enterprise, or even of romance that London itself might envy. The tide would flow under the arches of Waterloo-bridge, ay, and with the exception of what it derives from misery and despair, the other stream would pass above them all the same, though the Black Friars were still living in a street near it. The individual who chooses for himself a life in monastic retreat, who would feel miserable behind a counter or on a promenade, is not always thinking of himself and trying to show that he is the wisest, happiest, and most virtuous person in the world; for he knows that in life "you will find good and evil, folly and discretion more mingled, and the shades of character running more into each other than they do in the ethical charts," and that the palm of goodness may often be reserved for some obscure, self-devoted, generous, disinterested creature, working with a pen or a needle, along with others, or left alone in some garret in one of the courts or alleys near his own privileged enclosure. Catholicism, we are told, so far from wishing to impose its monastic life on all persons, absolutely condemns, as savouring of heresy, the absurd zeal of those fanatics who, from time to time, make their appearance, seeking to level distinctions, and transfer to the common society of mankind the rules and manners of the cloister. But then, on the other hand, it understands the variety of human character and of human wants, and with a wise and truly universal solicitude it provides, by means of different institutions, and by sanctioning different modes of life, equally for all.

"Una Dei domus est mundus; sed non tamen una
Omnibus est facies rebus. Circumspecte terras *."

The cloister and the world need not then assume a hostile attitude, and set each other at defiance. As an eminent writer says, "It is a characteristic trait of a great mind that it recognizes humanity in all its forms and conditions." The monk does not look society in the face and say, "Thou art heartless," he says rather, with a German author, that "Life in every shape should be precious to us, for the same reason that the Turks carefully collect every scrap of paper that comes in their way because the name of God may be written upon it." Men are, in some respect, moulded by circumstances; and the results are often what we should think unnatural, and even deplorable. It is in vain to deny it. We cannot have all things just as we might wish at any particular period of our life. True, courage is not given us only for the wars, but to resist the batteries of fortune. Yet after reason and spirit have all been called up to our aid, there are misfortunes of a kind so intense as to disqualify the most manly and vigorous minds afterwards for common life. Say what men like, there is a pang, for instance, in balked affection, for which, as the author of *Henrietta Temple* says, "no wealth, power, or place, watchful indulgence, or sedulous kindness can compensate. Ah! the heart, the heart!" There are many, besides, who want what even their domestic home refuses them, the repose of the nervous system. Take away the silent, tranquil asylums, compatible, mind, with a new and most useful activity, that faith had prepared for such persons, and you behold verified the poet's lines:

"If such may be the ills which men assail,
What marvel if at last the mightiest fail?
Breasts to whom all the strength of feeling given
Bear hearts electric-charged with fire from heaven,
Black with the rude collision, inly torn,
By clouds surrounded, and on whirlwinds borne,
Driven o'er the low'ring atmosphere that nurst
Thoughts which have turn'd to thunder—scorch—and burst."

Moreover, the constitutions of men from their birth are different, and there are various delights to suit them. Because one admires, loves, and respects these institutions provided for some, it does not follow that one thinks them to be designed for you. "Man and woman and their social life—poverty, labour, love, fear, fortune," are things, perhaps, for you to associate with. Your province lies inclosed in human life, in which, too, the heart and soul of beauty may be woven. This is the material for you to work upon. "You are to know its secrets of tenderness, of terror, of will. You have to work with men in houses and in streets. Your needs, appetites, talents, affections, accomplishments qualify you for such a sphere. You are to

know in your own beating bosom the sweet and smart of human life. Out of love and fear ; out of earnings, and borrowings, and lendings, and losses ; out of pain and anxiety ; out of wooing and worshipping ; out of travelling, and watching, and caring ; out of humiliations and suffering must come your tuition in the serene and beautiful laws of nature and of grace." There should be no antagonism, however, between you and the monk ; that which is good for him cannot hurt you. There is but a division of labour. The latter professes no vaunting, overpowering, excluding sanctity, which makes no allowance for your circumstances, your character ; but he welcomes and blesses all sweet natural goodness—the goodness of mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, friends, ay, and lovers too. Is it too much to ask in return that you should tolerate his retreat, his seclusion, or his active labours to compose some masterly or beautiful work of science or of art, to console the poor, to teach the ignorant, to redeem the captive ? There was a place, according to Strabo, near Oropus and the temple of Amphiarcus, which contained the sepulchre of Narcissus the Eretrian, which was called Of the Silent—Σιγηλοῦ, for the reason that it was the custom to pass it by in silence. ἐπειὴ σιγῶσι παρίοντες*. Is it demanding too great a sacrifice of personal feeling to desire that you should pass the monastery in silence, and leave the monk or the nun to pursue their unobtrusive ministry ? They are good and temperate. You may live to have need of such a virtue.

Some persons naturally like retreat. "All knight-errant as I am," says a celebrated traveller, "I have now the sedentary tastes of a monk. I have not put my foot out of this inclosure three times since I entered it. My pines and my firs keeping their promise, the Vallée-aux-Loups will become a true Char treuse." Men of a different character would be wretched in such seclusion ; and religion, we are assured, never consists in making persons wretched.

"Though Oberon would perforce have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild."

What suits one, therefore, may not agree with the natural capacity of another. In the old play, when Floriana says,

"Madam, I have vow'd my life to a cloister ;"

the queen of Arragon replies,

"Alas ! poor soul ! inclosure and coarse diet,
Much discipline and early prayer, will ill
Agree with thy complexion. There's Cleantha !
She hath a heart so wean'd from vanity,
To her a nunnery would be a palace."

But, on the other hand, elsewhere, when Decastro says,

“Throw off this habit —”

Ossuna answers,

“By all things sacred never.

In this I will grow old, and with the weight
Of years bend to the earth. In this I'll breathe
A happier air, than you in all your soft
And varied silks. —

And know, I am resolved ne'er to forsake it,
Till, in the vault, my earth and it together
Shall wear away to dust.”

You cannot change the ordination of nature. There will ever be this diversity of affinities, desires, and characters in the human family. “You will find,” says Hazlitt, “the business of life conducted on a much more varied and individual scale than you might expect. People will be concerned about a thousand things that you have no idea of, and will be utterly indifferent to what you feel the greatest interest in.”

As in general some order of monastic life is needed by a certain portion of mankind, so, to suit the variety of wishes and wants even within the class where that need is felt, we find that particular rules and institutions are provided for them. Within the ecclesiastical state there are posts and offices for men of all tastes and qualifications. One has the gift of government—he becomes an abbot; another, ever attentive to the spiritual side of things, renounces all, becomes a friar mendicant; another turns to study, and becomes a Benedictine; another to contemplation, and becomes a Carthusian. Some are for solitude, others for a community; some for an indoor life desire to be cloistered, others, for external action, are employed without doors. “There are some,” says the rule of blessed Ælred, “to whom it is most pernicious to live amongst many. There are others to whom, though not pernicious, it is most expensive. There are, in fine, others who fear neither of these things, but only think it more beneficial to live apart from men. Therefore the ancients, either to avoid danger or expense, or more freely to serve Christ, chose to live in solitude*.”

Each order has some specific object. One is devoted to the ransom of captives, another to the care of the sick in hospitals, another to contemplation, another to a life in community. “But,” adds Yepes, “the great Father Benedict—‘*cujus verba et imperia sectatores suos perducunt ad cœli palatia*’—opened a wide field to his children by prescribing the exercise of all good

works," and Benedictine monks are prepared for every kind of action*.

The character of our age is favourable, perhaps, to a calm observation of the subject which here presents itself; for our habits of mind are no longer those of the writers of the beginning of the last century, whose chief care, as a distinguished author says, "was to eschew the ridicule of sensibility or enthusiasm, and to give their countenance to no wisdom, no fancy, and no morality which passes the standards current in good company." We can repeat without being ridiculous what is advanced by those who treat on the different institutions of retreat provided by the ancient religion of Europe, transmitting thoughts and manners coeval with the world. The principle of the monastic life, then, is traced from the East and its revelations; from the prophets of the Old Testament, through the Apostles of our Lord, to those men and women who seem in Christian ages by an especial grace called to a voluntary fulfilment of certain supernatural ends. "After the coming of Christ—'post Christi adventum,'" says Baptist the Mantuan, speaking of the Carmelite order, "we have had for our rule of life the gospel of Christ, the acts and epistles of the Apostles. This same rule had Basil, had Augustin, had Benedict†." So Simplicius, abbot of Monte Cassino, speaking of the rule of St. Benedict, says:

"Qui levi jugo Christi colla submittere cupis,
Regulæ sponte da mentem, dulcia ut capias mella;
Hic testamenti veteris novisque mandata,
Hic ordo divinus, hicque castissima vita‡."

"The Church," says the rule of St. Leander, "has taken the private life from the custom of the Gentiles; but the life in community, or the monastic, from the example of the Apostles.§." "Notandum," says Buccihius, "quod ipsa regula fratrum minorum est totaliter hominis immutativa et renovativa; facit enim quod homo deponat veterem hominem cum actibus suis et novum Christum induat cum actibus suis per ipsius perfectam imitationem.||." St. Francis, accordingly, addressing the convent of Alenquere, in Portugal, of which so many brethren were martyred in Morocco, said—"Nunquam in te, O domus Dei, deficient perfecti fratres, qui devotissime sanctum observent Evangelium¶." St. Gregory, confirming the rule of St. Benedict from a consideration of its eternal foundation in truth, says

* Chron. Gen. ii. 373. † Bapt. M. Apologia pro Carmelitis.

‡ In Reg. S. Ben. ap. Luc. Holst. Cod. Reg.

§ Reg. S. Leandri, c. xvii.

|| Buccihius, Liber Conform. Vit. F. ad Vit. J. Christi, 132.

¶ In Vit. ejus.

guard. "Itaque velut pædagogus quidam est infirmioribus habitus iste religiosus; ut etiam, invitos eos ab opere in honesto indecentique custodiat*."

The ancient philosophers recognized the utility of rules for the conduct of life. Pliny says of his uncle, that "in summer he used to rise to study at the first dawn, and in winter in the night, 'et tanquam aliqua lege cogente†.'" If there be rule in unity itself, Catholicism, including provision for such varied wants and elements, could not but ordain it. "The unity of the monastic life continued," says Luke Holstein, "till the promulgation of the rule of St. Benedict. The primary and fundamental rule of monks was the Gospel. Particular rules later were nothing but applications or declarations of that first universal rule adapted to places and to persons‡." De Rancé remarks accordingly an instance, observing that St. Columban did not seek to found a new order, but only to explain the rule of St. Benedict already divulged. In early times, in fact, even each house had often particular constitutions, without thereby causing a diversity. The first rule of St. Augustin is supposed to have been written about the year 389, for the use of hermits who were his friends, dwelling in the mountains of Pisa§. In some houses ancient customs were still observed down to late times. At St. Symphorien in Autun, at the Ile-Barbe at Lyon, at St. Vincent of Paris, at Mici, at Agaune of Vienne, and in the Breton monasteries of St. Ilutut, the combined rules of St. Basil, St. Paul, and St. Anthony were observed. The rule of St. Macaire was observed at St. Seine in Burgundy, that of the oriental fathers at Marmoutier. But in the west the rule of rules was that of St. Benedict. Its influence extended even beyond the cloister. Charlemagne meditated on this rule when writing his laws; Hugues Capet called it the safe asylum of monarchs and subjects; Cosmo de Medicis carried it always in his bosom as a manual of wisdom.

In later times many authors have written contemptuously respecting the monastic rules. It is true that in all these there are certain minute domestic directions which seem ridiculous to a certain class of sophists, who in general have very absurd notions of what is required by dignity. But there is no common family in the world that does not find it necessary to determine by rule many minor details connected with its own internal arrangements. The same necessity gives rise to the minutiae of these codes; every thing is regulated, the labour, the studies, the food, the time for sleep, for prayer, even the very space allotted

* Reg. S. Basilii. xi. Resp.

† Epist. lib. iii. 5.

‡ Dissert. Præm. ad Regulas Mon.

§ Crusenius, i. 20.

to the tolling of bells, and, by the way, the duration of this sound was not calculated to weary the nervous or annoy the busy; for, by some rules, the bells were to toll only for the space of a *Miserere*, once or twice, or, at the very most, four times repeated, according to the season, the longest space being to announce complin*, which supposes an hour when the music of bells is soothing and beneficial to all who hear them. In general, the details, however minute, argue good sense and attention to what is right and useful in least as well as in greatest things. Thus Brother Weston, commenting on the Rule of the Friar-Minors, enforces cleanliness, saying, "that there is nothing so ill becomes religious men as the contrary, which displeases," he adds, "our holy founder, offends our brethren, disgusts seculars, and disgraces religion†." By certain statutes passed at Monte Cassino in the twelfth century, we see what attention was paid in the choir to avoid the least vulgarity or rudeness. Coughing even was to be practised "*caute et curiose, ut infirmis mentibus non vertatur in nauseam‡*." A Franciscan friar having, for some cause or other, laughed aloud one evening in their church at Oxford during complin, the fact, as a monstrous contravention of rule, was chronicled in the annals of the order. But it does not follow from all this that a religious house contained rules and no hearts, that the life within it consisted, as the author of a celebrated novel§ supposes, in doing all things decently and in order. We shall see proof presently that the vocation to it fitted some who were of less dry and stern mould; and, in truth, as the same writer says, "if feeling without judgment be a washy draught indeed, judgment untempered by feeling is too bitter and husky a morsel for human deglutition." In later times, when different orders arose, creating a diversity in customs, habits, and discipline, the unity of the monastic life was still preserved in the bond of peace and charity. Thus we find the charter of fraternity passed between the Carthusians of Ysenach and the Benedictine abbey of Reinhardsborn in 1391, in which they mutually engage to assist each other with their prayers and divine actions||. In 1514 it was decreed that in every monastery of the Cistercian order, in all their churches and chapels, the festival of St. Bruno, founder of the Carthusians, was to be solemnly celebrated, and that his commemoration was to be made daily by them in the divine office. The Carthusian monastery of St. Bruno, in Calabria, had applied to Cistercians for reforming their discipline, under whom it remained, till that year when it was restored to the Carthusians, who thenceforth

* Constitut. S. Romuald. Ord. Camald. c. iii.

† Ch. ii. 16.

§ Jane Eyre.

‡ Hist. Cassinens. viii. 443.

|| Thuringia Sacra, 156.

associated with their founder's title that of St. Stephen*. Similarly, the festival of St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, was celebrated with solemnity in the Franciscan order; and every one knows that the Franciscans and Dominicans cherished for each other a true fraternal affection, in memory of that friendship between their respective founders, which painting has immortalized with the words pronounced at their first meeting, "Sternus simul, Quis est adversarius noster?" In Poland, on a certain day, Dominican fathers are superiors in the Franciscan convents, and Franciscans in those of St. Dominic; their respective lay brothers having charge of the keys of the cellars of the houses to which they are thus temporarily appointed. This respect for other orders appears in the annalist of Grandmont, where he says, "It is to the honour of Grandmont that some authors regard it as a branch of the Benedictines, though it is not; being but as a certain rivulet of Calabria, flowing from the life of hermits there. Neither is it one of the mendicant orders, though it would not be less honourable if it were†." The Cistercians were in community of prayers with the monks of Grandmont; and Petrus Cellensis, abbot of St. Remy, not only sought fraternity with the latter, but begged commendatory letters from them to move the people to supply his monastery with alms‡. But there are facts still more significative. Thus the abbot of Mount Cassino permits St. Thomas of Aquin to build a convent of his order in the very town of his own abbey St. Germain. In 1579, Bernard, abbot of Mount Cassino, wishing to have a convent of Capuchins in the same town, gave them some ground and houses at a short distance from it, near a source of sweet water, where they built a convent. Also a convent of Minors was erected in the same century, not far from the town of Citrarius, belonging to the same abbey, which supplied them with the means for building it. The Abbot Ali-gernus founded a convent of St. John of nuns at Capua; and in 1570, the Abbot Mathias de Lignaseo endeavoured to found another convent in St. Germain itself§.

We observe individual members of different orders similarly disposed towards each other. St. Peter of Alcantara, though himself a reformer of his own order, suffering in consequence much contradiction, of which he never complained, but believing that the intentions of his opponents were always good, used to praise all religious orders, and to speak with the same veneration of all||. Trithemius, abbot of Spanheim, a Benedictine, writes

* Aubertus Miræus, Chron. Cister. 287.

† Levesque, cent. i.

‡ Levesque, Annal. Grand. 1.

§ Hist. Cassinens. xi. 697—700.

|| Marchese, iv. 9.

a work in praise of the Carmelite order *. Baron, the Franciscan, becomes the historian of the Trinitarians. "That I, a stranger," he says, "should write these annals, may be ascribed to my zeal or to the modesty of others who prefer being praised by a stranger, or perhaps to both. For I confess that I was most anxious to celebrate this most holy order ; for what higher than the divine Trinity ? what dearer to us than the Redeemer of captives ? and here we have both †." Speaking of Guido, count of Montefeltro, whom the Trinitarians claimed from the Franciscans, he says, "Equidem non adeo contendam eum amicis de una etsi divite præda ; sit ipsorum ; nec enim nos egemus comitibus, qui principibus abundamus, adhuc etiam regibus ‡." The great Abbot Regald, of the order of Grandmont, after procuring Franciscans and Jesuits to assist him, in 1625, in reforming his own order, died in the house of the Jesuits, with whom, as the annalist of his own order says, he was most intimately joined in affection §. Marina de Escobar beholds the action of the same charity in a celestial vision. "I beheld," she says, "two holy patriarchs, St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Dominick, who had a gentle strife, each wishing to yield precedence to the other in giving me a benediction, till at length obedience vanquished St. Dominick, and humility St. Ignatius, and St. Dominick gave his blessing first, and St. Ignatius then gave me his ||." When the late general of the Jesuits died, it was at the request of the superiors of other religious orders that his requiem was solemnly sung, and it was some of them who officiated on the occasion. It is but fair to infer from such passages that those persons have erred greatly who imagined that the monastic spirit was represented by such men as Mathieu Paris, who, on every occasion, shows his dislike of all orders but the black monks, reviling the later communities, and not sparing even the Cistercians of Pontigny, who come in for their share of his reproaches.

The advantages to be drawn from locality, which the monastic philosophy recognizes and insists upon, were not unperceived by the ancients. Cicero remarks that the manners and genius of men are formed by the very nature of the place in which they live and by the objects that surround them ¶ ; which observation may account for what the poet thinks he can discern, where he says,

" — sunt fata Deum : sunt fata locorum **."

* De Laudibus Ordinis Fratrum Carmelitarum.

† Epilog.

§ Levesque, cent. vi.

¶ Cont. Rullum.

‡ Annalis Ord. SS. Trin, 297.

|| P. i. lib. vi. c. 18.

** Statius, Sylv. iii.

Seneca observes, that some places are, more than others, wholesome for minds, and says, "*Non tantum corpori sed etiam moribus salubrem locum deligere nobis debemus.*" It was the same thoughts which actuated the monks in seeking for themselves that kind of retreat which their own characters required. Feeling a need for some barrier to protect themselves, they said with Alanus de Insulis, yet without intending to lay down a rule for others,

"*In palea dum grana jacent, immunda videntur,
Et similis pravis qui manet inter eos *.*"

Other ancient observations to the same effect, intended for their own especial use, were thus expressed by the monks :—

"*Qui venit ad turbam, purus licet ante probusque
A turba pejor sæpius ille redit
Qui venit ad sanctos, pravus licet ante malusque
Sæpius a sanctis sanctior ille redit.
Ab socio mores, pravique probique trahuntur.*"

After all, their specific object generally required what even the modern poet recommends, observing,

" — that wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude ;
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled and sometimes impair'd."

"*Da sapienti occasionem,*" says the unerring text, "*et addetur illi sapientia.*" Such was one of the motives of those who selected the site for monasteries. They knew, besides how true it is, as poet's say,

"*That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunts of men and herds.*"

If, as in Holy Week, men living in the world are able, by means of that short retreat with its associations, to refresh their intellectual and moral nature for the entire year, it is not strange to hear that great results must follow from the habit of longer intervals of sanctified retreat. "Turn my face towards Assisi," said St. Francis to the bearers who carried him in his last sickness ; and then he blessed the place, saying, "*Benedicaris a Domino, quia per te multe animæ salvabuntur, et multi in te servi altissimi habitabunt, et ex te multi eligentur ad regnum*

æternum*.” But you say, perhaps, with Bizarre in the old play, that you don’t understand this imprisoning people with the keys of paradise, nor the merit of that virtue which comes by constraint. Balmes notices the same objection, that in monasteries men are good by a sort of necessity. “Suppose it so,” he replies, “but know you not that the necessity of acting well is a happy necessity, which in some way assimilates man to God? Know you not that infinite goodness is incapable of doing ill, and that infinite sanctity can do nothing but what is holy? Theologians, explaining why the creature is capable of sinning, give this profound reason,—because, say they, the creature has been made out of nothing. When man constrains himself to act well, and chains his will, he ennobles himself, and renders himself more like God, becoming like the blessed who have no longer the sad liberty of acting ill, but who are under the happy necessity of loving God †.” “Many whom God calls,” says a Franciscan, “are lost, and many who come to serve Him through constraint are saved. Christ called Judas; and St. Paul, being overthrown, was forced to recognize Jesus Christ; so that it is no such great assurance to be called by the will of God, whereas many who are forced to come to religion by sickness or disaster, or constrained as it were by locality and the force of circumstances to remain in it, persevere to the end ‡.” “Il est bien plus seur,” says the historian of Henry IV., “de demeurer en la solitude d’un cloistre où l’on trouve beaucoup de moyens de profiter à sa conscience, et peu d’occasions de l’offencer que de courir les landes desertes du monde §.” This in fact is the view which is taken of retreat by the monastic writers. “Cum homine irreligioso,” says an ancient rule, “ne habitaveris, ne forte discas semitas ejus.” And again, “Justum igitur et valde justum est separari eum qui salvari vult, ab eo qui non vult ¶.”

But let us observe in more detail the characteristics of this peculiar kind of life. In the first place, its sanctity must strike attention and make an impression even on men like ourselves. You leave what is called society by the upper classes and repair to a religious house, where every thing presents a singular contrast to what you have lately observed. Let us hear Antonio de Guevara, writing on the 7th of January, 1535, from Valladolid to the abbot of Montserrat. “I know not,” he says, “if it be friends who counsel me, relations who importune me, enemies who turn me aside, affairs which I have always in hand,

* Specul. Vit. S. F. cap. 103.

† Lo Prot. comparé au Catholicisme, ch. 38.

‡ Ant. de Guevara, Discourse to the Provincial Chapter.

§ Pierre Mathieu, vii.

¶ Regula Solitiorum.

Cæsar who, without ceasing, commands me, or the devil who tempts me, but the more I propose to withdraw from the world the more I sink deeply into it. I know not who can wish to remain here, seeing how we have to endure hunger and cold, weariness and poverty, fatigues, sadness, melancholy, envyings, disfavour, and persecutions, all arising from the circumstance that there is no one to take from us our liberty, or call us to an account for our idleness. Assuredly you cannot believe or doubt that, both for soul and body, the life here which we courtiers lead is better than what you had there above on Montserrat amidst your rocks and pines, or that it is better to hear what passes in this court than to experience what is found with you. For, at the court, he who is not at war is forgotten, and he who is rich is pursued. Small is the number at court of those who are content, and great the numbers of those who live in hatred and discontent. At the court every one tries to be the favourite, and, in fine, there is only one who commands all. At the court there is no one who wishes to die in it; and the end is that we see no one able to leave it. At the court are few who do what they wish, and still less who do what they ought. At the court all blaspheme the court, and yet all follow the court. Therefore if, with these conditions, it pleases your paternity to come to the court and exchange with me for it your Montserrat, I swear to you on the faith of a Christian that you will oftener repent having become a courtier than I shall do for becoming a monk at Montserrat." "In the world," says Buccinus, "are often found contempt of God, disobedience of his commandments, luxury, avarice, derisions of the servants of God, irreverence to all, infidelity to Christ, affection to the world, despite of the poor, impatience, the appetite of praise, detraction, foul delight, gluttony, constant quarrels, disparagement of neighbours, avidity of gain, neglect of virtue, loss of time, hatred of the poor, confidence of life, lukewarmness to act well, making slight of heaven, love of earthly things, discussion, hatred of humility, the defence of sin, ambition, following of falsehood, elation of mind, emulation, fallacy, disquietude, anxiety about little things, indiscretion, inconstancy, enmity, pride of heart, derision of the Redeemer. It is through a wish to fly from these evils that some adopt the way of embracing the monastic yoke*." "Andrea Orgagna, painter, sculptor, and architect of Florence represented," says Vasari, "on the walls of the Campo Santa at Pisa the temporal nobility of every degree surrounded by all the pleasures of this world: these knights and ladies, with instruments of music, and falcons ready for the chase, are seated in the midst of a meadow enamelled

* Liber Conformit. Franc. ad Vitam J. Christi, 132.

with flowers, and beneath the shade of orange trees. In short, in this first part of his work he depicted whatever the rich world has to offer that is most delightful. On the other side of the same picture is a high mountain, on which Andrea has represented the life of those who, moved by repentance and by desire of salvation, have retired from the world to that solitude which is occupied by holy hermits whose days are passed in the service of God, and who are pursuing various occupations; some reading or praying, some wholly intent on a life of contemplation; others, labouring to gain their bread, are actively employed in different ways. One hermit is seen milking a goat. On the lower part of the hill is St. Macarius calling the attention of three kings, who are riding forth to the chase, accompanied by their ladies and followed by their train, to human misery as exhibited in three monarchs lying dead but not wholly decayed within a sepulchre. The living potentates regard this spectacle with serious attention, and one might almost say, that they are reflecting with regret on their own liability shortly to become such as these they are looking upon. In the centre of the picture is Death robed in black, and flying through the air, and intimating by a scythe that the crowds lying dead have been by him deprived of life; and the whole work is filled with inscriptions composed by Orgagna himself, who caused the words thus to issue from the mouth of each." Such are the contrasts to which this road, leading by monasteries, introduces us, and such the solemn thoughts which are presented to those who follow it. The impressions resulting from the lesson may at first to observers from without be painful; but a voice, like that of the old poetry and philosophy, seems to forbid our judging harshly in regard to the fate of those who have taken up their rest in such enclosures. We hear words like those in the "Triumph of Time,"—

"Man, be not sad; nor let this divorce
From Mundus, and his many ways of pleasure,
Afflict thy spirits! which, considered rightly,
With inward eyes, makes thee arrive at happy."

Nevertheless, it is not to be denied but that to us strangers, coming here from the busy haunts of life, many things, though not, indeed, essentially, yet sometimes, belonging to such a life, seem strange, and according to our apprehension exaggerated. What can be more singular, for instance, than that according to the rule of the Brigittin nuns, there should be a grave always open in the monastery, to which every day, after tierce, the sisters might proceed, where the abbess, sprinkling a little earth with two fingers, should read the *De Profundis*, with a

collect praying that their souls may be preserved uncorrupt, in the same manner as the body of Christ was preserved in the sepulchre*. But the truth is, that it is not for others to judge what is expedient for these families whose thoughts are so habitually cheerful. No doubt, to the sanctity of these recluses, death has no austere aspect; they are risen above the apprehensions of mortality. "Sursum cor habebant," says the rule of St. Augustin, "et terrena vana non querant." But what we have to observe here generally is the holy virtue for which all things are ordained. Mathieu Paris says, "that the Minor Friars were the more enlightened in the contemplation of celestial things from their being so alien to the affairs of this world†." "A certain Dominican monk, well known to me," says Henry Suso, "used daily, morning and evening, for the space of two vigils of the dead, to be so absorbed in God and eternal wisdom that he lost the power of speech; he breathed, he wept, he smiled, his heart was inundated with the divinity." How marvellously did St. Francis imitate the life of his divine Master! Buechius concludes his great work, describing that conformity, with these words: "Thus did our Lord Jesus Christ make blessed Francis conformable to Himself; so putting an end to this work I render thanks to thee, O Lord Jesu Christ, Redeemer and Saviour of all, who art the true light enlightening every man, from whom whatever of good, and right, and just, and true, proceeds and originates, for having deigned to grant me to speak of the merits of our glorious father, blessed Francis; and if they seem in the first instance to his glory, nevertheless are they all to thy glory, who alone didst make him what he was." Certainly whatever external observers themselves may be, a life at once so divine and human, so marvellous and so gracious, should strike no one with any impressions but those of love, respect, and admiration. To imitate Christ, by doing good to others, ought surely to prove a title to human favour, unless we wish to retrace our steps far behind even the ancient philosophers, who, if we can judge from their writings, would have thought such piety adorable. "It is clear," says Plato, "that every man of sense will conclude that he ought always to walk in the steps of the Divinity, and the way to recommend oneself to the Divinity is to resemble Him‡." The retreat from the world, in the evil sense of the word, effected in these communities was very profound. It is often a stirring of the soul's inward depths when a traveller arrives at one of these houses, where men,

* Regula Salvatoris, cap. 27.

† Ad ann. 1207.

‡ De Legibus, iv.

perhaps the most remarkable for high intellectual qualities, are found concealing themselves

“ In some reclusive and religious life
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.”

True as the forest region of Etna, during an eruption from the volcano, is disturbed from its usual silence with noises sinister and terrible, so the inhabitants of the cloister are not wholly unconscious of the political convulsions around them. “The report of the change of the ministry, and of Polignac being chosen by Charles X., had reached our pine forest,” says a monk of La Trappe. Nevertheless he remarks an instance of greater slowness of communication between, at least, some individuals in such places and the world; for he speaks of a monk of that house who, having entered it in the reign of Napoleon, had not heard of his fall. The Bourbons were restored; he knew it not: they were overthrown, Belgium became a kingdom; he had not heard of it: and in the year 1831 he thought that Napoleon was still upon his throne*. Yet the love of country was not banished from these retreats; for after all, what is meant by the words—to love one’s country? A Luis of Leon, or a Mabillon, for instance, as Goethe says of the poet, “who wars against prejudice and narrow-mindedness, who enlightens his nation, elevates its taste and its thoughts—what more can he do? What greater benefits can he confer upon his country?” Dom Germain, writing to Dom Bretagne, accounts for his quitting Rome before having completed certain works, and says, that “*revocantis amor patriæ*” was one cause of his leaving them unfinished†. In ancient monasteries there was a porch called the Galilee. This was a place outside where monks received strangers, and the name was derived from the words “Go into Galilee, there he will meet you.” The name, therefore, implied the sanctity expected from those who embraced this divine kind of life, which consisted in following the counsels of our Lord, so as to verify the words “*monachus alter Christus*.” “One cup,” says St. John Climachus, “gives a taste of the wine, and one word of a solitary hermit, to those who can taste it, immediately reveals his interior actions‡.” He speaks thus of a state which the poet seems to have described in the lines,—

“ The chains of earth’s immurement
Fell from his spirit—

* Hist. des Trappistes du Val Sainte-Marie.

† Correspond., Let. 80.

‡ Scal. Par. 27.

They shrank and broke like bandages of straw
 Beneath a wakened giant's strength.
 He knew his glorious change,
 And felt in apprehension uncontrolled,
 New raptures opened round
 Each day-dream of his mortal life,
 Each glorious vision of the slumbers
 That closed each well-spent day
 Seemed now to meet reality."

This life it is true involves as one of its conditions the observance of an exceptional law—that of celibacy; and on this account objections, that would be invincible if founded on truth, have been often raised against it. But they rest on a wholly mistaken or unfair statement of things. When it is said that "the Roman Catholic religion has branded love by making it incompatible with monastic life, as if love and holiness were irreconcilable opposites," the folly is only in the speaker's imagination. Catholicism brand love! Why it would be as fair to say that nature has branded love, since unquestionably many persons are naturally devoted to solitude and averse to every other attraction! Where has such an insane attempt been traced to the real monk or friar? Is it Shakspeare's hooded men who brand love? Is it the Dominicans who give marriage portions? All these mistakes arise from the original error of supposing that the desires of mankind are uniform. But this is what can never be shown; and that some persons should have chosen to withdraw from the sphere of passions which they may pity or even admire and respect in others, ought to be no ground of offence to a judicious and impartial observer. With respect to the comparative excellence of such a state, Catholicism has invented nothing, and, perhaps, has never authoritatively pronounced any absolute direct sentence, whereas the same cannot be predicated of philosophy. Celibacy is admitted by Protestants "to be in some cases noble and virtuous*." And it is remarkable that a writer, most opposed to Catholicity and its institutions, should have fixed upon this most salient feature of monastic life to account for those possessing it being eminently divine men. Every one has heard his lines,—

"So dear to heaven is saintly chastity
 That when a soul is found sincerely so,
 A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
 Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
 And, in clear dream and solemn vision
 Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;

'Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
 Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape—
 The unpolluted temple of the mind,
 And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
 Till all be made immortal *."

Leaving, however, the observers from without, who often take an exaggerated view even of good, let us remark what a high mystic colouring accompanies all ancient representations of the monastic life. The Abbot Rupertus, for instance, speaks as follows: "In the last day of the great feast we read Jesus stood and cried, saying, 'Si quis sitit, veniat ad me, et bibat, &c.' Let us attend not to the words only, but to the time when he uttered them. It was the festival called the *Scenophegia*, or the feast of tabernacles, when they commemorated the tabernacles in which they had dwelt, while wandering in the desert, when led out of Egypt. On that day our Lord invited not all, but such as were thirsting, to drink of the chalice of the Holy Spirit. We, too, led out of the Egypt of infidelity, delivered from the servitude of the spiritual Pharaoh, and conducted through the sea of baptism, but still wandering through the desert of the present life, dwell in tabernacles, which are the churches or monasteries, in which we militate until we arrive at the kingdom of the eternal inheritance. If, then, we are mindful of the benefits of God, let us celebrate this feast, abstaining from evil works, and exulting in the contemplation of the divine goodness. We hear the cry of Him inviting, we run thirsty, and we drink from the source which is so mercifully opened to us †." Following the same images, Caesar of Heisterbach explains the temptations to which the monastic life is exposed. Here let us pause a moment. In point of fact, unquestionably, this state of life includes some of the best of men. "I do not accuse all," says Salvian, "of these vices of the Roman people; for I except first, all the monks, and then some seculars who are equal to them, or, at least, who have some resemblance to them in probity ‡." Nevertheless it is no less certain from the testimony of the monks themselves, that the religious life is a life of combat and of resistance; it is the Mount of Myrrh and the Hill of Frankincense; it is the life of humanity and the celestial life conjoined; and accordingly, before giving instances, Caesarius traces its temptations to the very perfection which belongs to it. "The children of Israel," he says, "ascending from Egypt are soon tempted in the desert. Egypt represents the world, the desert the monastery. Egypt is interpreted Darkness or Tribulation, and where do you find greater

* Comus.

† De Divinis Officiis, lib. x. c. 7.

‡ Lib. iv. 13.

darkness and tribulation than in the world and sin? No where. The children of Israel are the elect, who no sooner leave the world by conversion, and enter the monastery, as it were the desert, but they are exposed to temptations." Whereas, he adds, "*seculares atque carnales improprie tentari dicuntur, quia mox ut tentamenta sentiunt consentiunt* *." "This temptation, however," says St. Francis, "is no invincible obstacle; it is the mountain which with the least faith can be removed." Examples to illustrate such views are given in the ancient books. "Three knights," says an old writer, "had entered religion at the same time; one of them persevered; the other two were tempted to turn back. They first, however, asked the other how he was able to be so cheerful and occupied each instant? He replied, 'I have found only three letters which my master taught me on leaving the world, which I am never tired reading over and over. The one is written in black, which signifies my faults; this is what I read from dawn till mass. The second is written in red, which signifies the passion of our Saviour, which I read from mass till none. The third is written in gold, which is the beauty and joy of heaven, and this I read till complin; and so I never feel a moment of my time heavy on my hands †.'"

The instances supplied by Cæsarius are curious, at least when given in his own words. "A certain young and delicate soldier," he says, "named Henry, a few years ago converted and received in the monastery of Hemmenrode, was asked one day by a former fellow-soldier how the order pleased him. He replied that he was then well-pleased with every thing, but that for a time he had been much discontented; for he said that at first he had in horror the solemn vigils; so that when he had to go to matins he used to suffer greatly from weakness and weariness, but that one night, while hardly able to stand, being placed on the seat of the infirm, he was seized with an ecstacy, in which the blessed Virgin appeared to him, filling him with such delight, that ever after it was his chief happiness to go to matins; and when I asked him if this were true, he did not deny it †." "Alia," he says again, relating what he heard with an amusing simplicity, "is a house of our order in Flanders, in which, a few years ago, lived a certain monk, who had been a noble knight, named Gerard of the Castle of Tuinus. While a novice in the choir of novices, he used to be tempted with displeasure on hearing the clamour of the monks in the upper choir, especially when the Allelujas were loudly sung; so that becoming pusillanimous he went to the prior, and said, 'Lord prior, my head pains me, nor can I endure any longer that clamour over my

* Lib. iv. 1.

† Mag. Spec. 93.

† Lib. vii. c. 36.

head.' The prior in vain attempted to console him. One night after he had been greatly tempted thus, he saw himself, as it were, surrounded by some soldiers who were his enemies, and without means of escape; and when he expected to be captured or slain, he cried to the Lord for deliverance, when, lo! an army of white-robed persons approached from afar to succour him, whose cry of arms was Alleluja; at which sound the troops of the enemy took fright and fled, leaving him alone. The next day he went to the prior cheerfully, and said, 'Henceforth sing Alleluja still louder over my head; the clamour of the divine praises will not trouble me more;' and then he related the vision. This was told me by a man of holy memory, Walter de Birbach, who had seen and known the said Gerard*." He relates very graphically another instance as follows: "A certain monk of Otterburg, as its head Abbot Philip related to us, incurred temptations to return to the world. One night, as he stood in choir, meditating when or how he should leave the monastery, and unable through weariness to sing, he was suddenly delivered in this manner. At lauds, while the monk chanted the song of Habacuc, as it was the sixth feria, the said abbot walked round to excite the brethren, who coming to this wavering monk who did not sing, and thinking that he was asleep, stooped towards him, and loudly sung in his ear the verse which all were then singing, 'Egrediatur diabolus ante pedes ejus;' hearing which, the other was greatly terrified, thinking that the abbot by some revelation had discovered his perverse thoughts, to which the prophetic sentence seemed so marvellously applicable, and thus recalled by divine virtue he became constant ever afterwards†." It may be well, however, in order to forestal objections wherever there is a possibility of their occurring, to remark by the way, that the difficulties here which opposed men returning to the world were not caused by the severity of monastic legislation, but by the conscience of individuals. "Mandamus universis fratribus," say the constitutions of the Dominicans, "quatenus novitios volentes redire ad seculum libere permittant ire, redditibus sibi omnibus, quæ secum detulerant; nec sint eis molesti propter hoc: exemplo illius, qui discipulis aliquibus recedentibus, aliis remanentibus dixit, numquid et vos vultis abire‡?" Fulbert of Chartres writes to an abbot, saying, "A certain stranger brother, by name Hermengand, has come to us with the countenance, words, and habit of a penitent; saying that through his fault he has been expelled from the paradise of your monastery, bearing about a dying mind in a wearied body. Therefore we are constrained through pity to intercede for him.

* iv. 54.

† iv. c. 55.

‡ Constitutiones Fratrum Ord. Prædicatorum, Dist. 1.

We pray you, then, in the name of the Lord, who is near those who have a troubled heart, to receive back this son, though late returning*." In fact, the difficulty that existed was to enter, not to leave the monastery. "When a person demands the habit," says an ancient rule, "he is not to be easily credited, but he must be tried long previously; and, at first, every thing bitter and contrary to his will is to be proposed to him, and the abbot is to set before him whatever may prove the sincerity of his contrition, and not till after a year are its consolations to be related to him." The same rule is laid down for nuns†. And we read that to postulants, desiring to be received among the Benedictines, the difficulties of the regular discipline are to be stated in the first instance, that they may deliberate whether they can surmount them.

But to return and observe the sanctity of this retreat. We shall see how well over the portal of monasteries might be inscribed, with reference to the character of those who inhabit them, the words of the prophet, "*Aperite portas et ingrediatur gens justa custodiens veritatem.*" Very impressive is it by means of ancient letters to listen, as it were, to the familiar conversation of such men. Let us hear Peter the Venerable writing to Peter of Poitiers. "Have you forgotten," he says to him, "our frequent and earnest conversations? O how often, when the door was shut and every mortal excluded, and He alone who is always in the midst of those who think or speak of Him was witness, have we held solemn discourse on the blindness of the human heart and its hardness, on the snares of various sins, on the different kinds of demoniac craft, on the depths of God's judgments! Conversations on these and similar subjects, when the noise of the world was shut out, formed a sort of hermitage for me in the midst of men." One is struck, too, on observing the tone of deep gravity which prevails here; though when commenting on the words of St. Benedict's rule, "*Scurrilitates vero vel verba otiosa damnamus,*" the fathers of Mount Cassino, in 1472, seem to proceed to great lengths, saying, "By this sentence we command all superiors of our monasteries to pay diligent attention to the observance of this rule; and, in order to obviate such evils, we prohibit all occasions that might lead to them. We prohibit to be kept in monasteries, '*aves aut animalia ad jocos aut levitatem provocantia et ludicra omnia penitus inhibemus*†."

It is remarked that the profound and sweet religion of the hooded man is sometimes evidenced even by his countenance. Dom Maurice, the subprior of Val-Sainte-Marie, bore, says a

* Ep. lxxi. † Regula Magistri, xc. Regula S. Donati, c. vi.

‡ Hist. Cassinens. xi. 651.

monk of the same house, sensible marks of his devotion to the blessed mother of our Lord. "Have you," he asks, "ever seen a sweeter, purer, more celestial face?" But what most of all strikes one's attention when coming to these sacred inclosures from the world is the prominent fact, that those who have fled to them as to an asylum, are to an extraordinary degree men of prayer—men of familiar and truly wondrous intercourse with Heaven. Now if you will hear the great professed thinkers of our age, this is another very legible index. "For is not prayer," one of them asks, "a study of truth, a sally of the soul into the infinite? No man ever prayed heartily without learning something*." In a social and political point of view is it not better to have praying nuns, than what very often follows their suppression, namely, weeping queens? monks stationary and chanting, rather than a full development of the principle which puts an end to them, namely, kings driven out or flying to head their armies to carry on war against each other, or on their own revolted subjects, who are fighting too, perhaps, against each other, as when Ralph the Grocer says in the old play, "Gentlemen, countrymen, friends, and my fellow-soldiers, I have brought you this day from the shops of security and the counters of content, to measure out in these furious fields honour by the ell and prowess by the pound!"

But let us observe proof of the monastic disposition in respect to prayer. "Pray, brothers," says St. Bernard, "and pray earnestly; for he wears a coat dipped in blood who nourishes his body with the alms of the people, if he makes not a proportionate return by prayer and thanksgiving; for these goods are given us in consideration of the divine service." Such was, in fact, the general impression. Mark this charter: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I, Garseas, son of Enneco the king, thinking on my countless sins, which I have rashly perpetrated through the instigation of the enemy of man, and fearing in the day of tremendous judgment to be counted amongst the goats on the left, have come, with the advice of my son Fortunius, to the monastery of the Holy Saviour at Leira, and there, in presence of the Lord Bishop Eximinus, have entered into the society of prayers with the brethren there serving, believing that by their prayers I can be defended from adversities in this life, and from perpetual damnation in the next†." The letter of William, count of Poitiers, written to Leo, a religious man, furnishes another example: "You ask," he says, "for a wonderful mule, and promise to give me whatever I ask in return. I cannot send the mule you desire, for there are no mules in

* Emerson.

† Ap. Hieron. Blanca, Arragonensium Rerum Comment. 46.

our country horned, or three-tailed, or five-footed; but I will send you a good mule with a good bridle; nor do I ask you to give me whatever I wish, but I only demand in return that you will pray for me, 'ut inhabitem in domo Domini omnibus diebus vitæ meæ, ut videam voluptatem Domini et protegar a templo sancto ejus *.' Similarly, before setting off for the Holy Land, Earl Richard, brother of Henry III., came to the monastery of St. Albans, and asked from the chapter the gift of fraternity and participation in their prayers, as he had done in some other abbeys where holiness and discipline were most flourishing †. Fulbert of Chartres, a man not likely to be deceived in his judgment of others, invokes the prayers of a monk, saying, "Sum enim valde miserabilis homo, cui cum ad propriam non sufficerem, ad publicam curam nescio qua seu ratione, seu temeritate perductus sum ‡." The cloistral histories abound with instances in which the efficacy of the monastic prayers was thought to be visible. Garsten is a river which washes the walls of the monastery in Bavaria to which it gives the name. "It happened," says the chronicler of that house, "that on one occasion, the river being swollen with torrents, inundated all the offices of the cloister, so that the fathers could not stir from their cells without walking through the water." The monks were men who knew something about drainage and embankments. Nevertheless, on this occasion, we read, the prayers of the Abbot Berthold were believed to have such effect, that in consequence of them the river was never afterwards known to molest the community §. Cæsar of Heisterbach cites another instance. "At the time," he says, "of the schism between Alexander and Calixtus, under the Emperor Frederic, who caused and defended it, all the churches throughout the empire were compelled to swear fidelity and obedience to Calixtus, whom he had made pope, and all who resisted were banished. When the letters came to the convent of Hemmenrode, and the brethren were all unanimous, saying that they would never abandon unity, they were commanded to depart immediately from the empire. These men, making more account of the divine fear than of royal threats, packed up all their goods and vestments, and received notice to what houses in the kingdom of the Franks they were to direct their steps. One of them however, David, a venerable priest, asked the reason, as if he knew nothing about it; so they said to him, 'Father, are you not aware then that we are all going away?' for he was so intent on heavenly things, that he was ignorant of all that took place in regard to temporals. So when they had

* Fulberti, Episc. Epist.

† Mat. Paris, 1241.

‡ Ep. lxviii.

§ Raderus, Bavaria Sancta, iv. 74.

explained the whole affair to him, the blessed man, having great confidence in God, replied: 'Be comforted, brethren, for the Lord will not desert those that trust in Him. Only sing with contrition and tears the Antiphon for the Magnificat of this night, and the Lord will console you.' It was the Sunday before Advent, when the Antiphon is 'Qui cœlorum continet thronos et abyssos intueris, terram pugno concludis exaudi nos in gemitibus nostris.' Meanwhile the saint went into the church and poured out his soul in prayer. The brethren acquiescing in his counsel, sung the Antiphon that night with great fervour; and the pious Lord, being moved by the tears of his servants, changed the heart of the emperor, so that letters were sent hastily to countermand the expulsion, ordering the monks to remain and to pray for the prosperity of the empire*." Kings and people believed in the efficacy of those suffrages which were offered by religious men for nations and for the world, and after all, sooth to say, it was only natural that they should do so. A father fears to lose his son who is sick; he lies down with his face prostrate on the earth, and remains there as a victim offered up by the highest and deepest part of his soul. The boy recovers, and perhaps to the astonishment of the physicians. Now what a father does for his child on the one occasion of his danger, a monk does continually for the miseries of the whole human family. Why should we entertain doubts respecting the consequences? In a council over which presided St. Leger, in the seventh century, these words were delivered: "If the rule of St. Benedict be properly observed, with God's assistance, the number of monks will increase, 'et mundus omnis per eorum orationes assiduas, malis carebit contagiiis.'" There is no want of evidence to prove that these obligations were well understood and generally fulfilled by the inhabitants of cloisters. We are to pray, they say, especially, first, "Pro peccatis nostris, deinde pro omni populo Christiano, deinde pro sacerdotibus et reliquis Deo consecratis sacræ plebis gradibus, postremo pro elemosynas facientibus; postea pro pace regum, novissime pro inimicis; ne illos Deus statuât in peccatum quod persequuntur et detrahunt nobis, quia nesciunt quid faciunt†." Who can turn away in displeasure from such virtue? who will not respect it? "Do you ask," demands an old poet, "why this grove of deep wood is so dear to me? It is because the monk prays there:

"Pour ce, Boquet, que soubz ton vert lambris
Par fois s'heberge un pauvre habit de gris,

* c. 19.

† Regula S. Columbani, c. 7.

Qui à l'escart priant à deux genoux
Contraint le ciel de quitter son courroux *."

Bede, speaking of Ceolfrid, commends his "*incomparabilem orandi psallendique sollertiam, qua ipse exerceri non desiit*†." The historian of Grandmont, speaking of St. Stephen, says that the number of his genuflexions, and of the kisses which he gave the earth, lying on it prostrate, no one can tell, as they are known to God only. It is this living actual communication with Heaven which St. Bernardine of Sienna found so admirable in St. Francis, saying that he walked once ten Italian miles saying only one Pater-noster, which mode of praying, he adds, "those lay brothers would do well to take notice of that are so quick at their prayers." Examples of the same intercourse abound in these holy places. The virtuous prior of Norwich, who died in 1257, is described by Mathieu Paris as "a man of great holiness and eminent learning, who, besides mass, the canonical hours, secret and special prayer, used to finish each day the Psalter, singing it." Cæsar of Heisterbach gives some striking examples. "In the monastery of St. Panthaleon, in Cologne, which is of Black Monks, there was," he says, "a youth named Godefrid, of very holy life, who through desire of greater sanctity came to us and humbly sought to be received; but our abbot, fearing that he was moved by levity, would not consent, so he went to Villars and obtained what he desired; the perfection of whose subsequent life is testified by his sacred relics. On one occasion the Lord Charles, abbot of Villars, who had been our prior, coming to us, brought with him the same holy man; and, as they tell me who saw him, he had such grace of devotion from God in saying mass, that the tears used to fall from his eyes on the altar and on his breast. When Theodoric de Lureke, then a novice, asked him how he ought to pray, he replied, 'You ought to say nothing in prayer, but only to think of the nativity, passion, and resurrection of our Saviour, and other such subjects known to you.' This holy man had the spirit of prophecy, and he saw visions. In his last sickness, when he was in the agony, and the hour of dinner came, the monk who was attending him said, 'I do not wish to go to dinner, for fear you should die in the interval.' 'Go,' said the dying man, 'fear not, I shall see you again.' While the other was at table Godefrid appeared at the door of the refectory, looked at the monk, blessed him, and then proceeded on as if towards the church. The other terrified, supposing that he was miraculously cured, forgot the promise that he had made to

* Le Vapeur, le Bocage de Jossigny, 1603.
† Hist. Abb. Wiremuth.

him, but on returning to the infirmary it was found that he had died. His bones have been recently taken up and placed in a reliquary*." Peter the Venerable, describing the life of a hermit at Cluny, says: "This austere, abstinent, charitable monk, of an incomparable patience and humility, passed his days in psalmody and meditations on the Holy Scriptures, and all his nights in prayer, even the long nights of winter. The blessed man was confined, as in a kind of oratory, at the top of a high and very slender tower far from the abbey. Night and day was he raised in contemplation above mortal things, and united by interior vision to the choir of angels."

At this mention of the nocturnal vigils it may be well for us again to stop for a moment, while observing monastic devotion on this side, which is found to be so striking and poetical. Coming to be received as members in these religious houses, where disguised poisons are detected, where the faces of evil angels are unmasked, where all deceptions are led to Time to fill his triumph, and their memories forgotten for ever, men who have had experience of some great personal deliverance are seen to kneel, and, with an earnestness and consequence of action which others can hardly conceive possible, to cry,—

"Oh just, great God ! how many lives of service,
What ages only given to thine honour,
What infinites of vows and holy prayers,
Can pay my thanks !"

Such feelings can partly explain the phenomenon which will now be presented.

No word is more familiar in monasteries than Vigil, the symbolic meaning of which, perhaps, would have charmed the ancients. "Profecto enim," says Pliny, "vita vigilia est †." The office of the night flows out of the law of the canonical hours, to the mystic origin of which there is reference in these old lines :

"Hæc sunt septenis propter quæ psallimus horis ;
Matutina ligat Christum, qui crimina purgat ;
Prima replet sputis ; causam dat Tertia mortis ;
Sexta cruci nequit ; latus ejus Nona bipartit ;
Vespera deponit ; tumulto Completa reponit."

"There is no hour of the day or night," says an English traveller of the last century, "in which God's praises are not sung in Paris. The Oratorians begin the divine office at seven o'clock in the evening ; at St. Geneviève it commences at eight, with the Penitents at nine, with the Carmelites at ten, with the Carthusians at eleven ; at St. Victor's it continues till two ; from

* Lib. i. c. 35.

† Nat. Hist. lib. i. 36.

two to four it is sung by the Benedictines, Bernardines, and divers others ; from four till five and seven it is celebrated in the collegiate churches*." In some places the chant of pilgrims was added during the intervals. Thus, at Montserrat, the monks leave the church at seven in the evening, and then the pilgrims come in their turn, and sing canticles a great part of the night. Sometimes, when the monks return at midnight for matins, the pilgrims are still there, when they are told to be silent. In that abbey the high mass every day is sung at four o'clock. The office of the Blessed Virgin, which is of greater antiquity than is often supposed, since it was instituted neither by St. Peter Damian, nor by the Cistercians, passed from the hermits and monks to the secular clergy, who received it devoutly, as Pope Urban II. remarked, in 1095, and thence the custom of repeating these hours passed to the laity, both men and women †. But to return to the monks' choir. Where monasteries exist, if lights are seen in the night-time amidst woods and mountains, they are not always like those which appeared upon Parnassus ‡,—they do not indicate the presence of Bacchus dancing, but of the monk watching ; of

"Rome's fondest friend, whose meagre hand
Tells to the midnight lamp his holy beads."

Or perhaps they denote the vigil of some superior, like Dom Constant, dating his letter from midnight to give force to his entreaties to be relieved from the burden of his high office. Darkness, says the Greek poet, is august—

σεμνότηρ' ἔχει σκότος ὧ.

The monk, too, seems to have thought so ; for it may be often said of him that he is occupied like the poet worshipping the Muses at his country-house,

"Dum parvus lychnus modicum consummat olivi ||."

He might have said, with Cicero, "*Hanc scripsi ante lucem, ad lychnuchum ligneolum, qui mihi erat perjucundus.*" But the church and cloisters of monasteries were not left in obscurity during the night ; Cassiodorus, who contrived the water instead of sand-clocks, invented lamps for the monks, which burned long without much consumption of oil ¶. Bertrand, abbot of Cluny in 1297, is recorded to have established four luminaries at the

* Carr's *Pietas Parisiensis*, 3. † Gattula, *Hist. Cassinens.* 1.

‡ Eurip. *Bacch.*

§ *Id.* 486.

|| Martial.

¶ Yepes, *Chron. Gen.* ad ann. 550.

four angles of the cloister in lanterns of glass*. Travelling through wild forests and gorges of steep rocks, when black night has stretched her gloomy limbs and laid her head upon some mountain top, bound up in foggy mists, the light seen glimmering from monastic churches reminds men that religious persons are there assembled,

“—— Daring to follow Him
Who on the mountain watch'd the night away.”

All over the world, and not in Paris alone, the Divine office continues through the whole night, like a light of fire that is watched and replenished. The Carmelites of St. Theresa rise at nine o'clock at the beginning of the night, the Carthusians at ten, the mendicant orders at midnight, the Benedictines and Cistercians after midnight, the canons regular at four, and the secular canons at daybreak. In one of the nocturnal hymns the prayer is to this effect :

“ Quicumque ut horas noctium
Nunc concinendo rumpimus
Ditemur omnes affiatim
Donis beatæ Patriæ †.

And “in fact,” says St. John Climachus, “it is in the prayers at night that solitary men amass all the riches of their knowledge.”

“ There is a force in nightly-chanted psalms ;
Whoso would pass his nights in wakeful rest
Might imitate on spiritual enemies
The deed of Gideon.”

The nocturnal office of the monks nourishes men who love those psalms which St. Augustin, on his conversion, so delighted to sing, saying, “*Quomodo in te inflammabar ex eis? Et accendebam eos recitare si possem toto orbe terrarum adversas typhum generis humani ‡.*” Here is in part experienced what Dante so magnificently describes in the lines,—

“ Then heard I echoing on, from choir to choir,
‘Hosanna’ to the fixed point, that holds,
And shall for ever hold them to their place,
From everlasting irremovable §.”

The chant itself, whatever may be said by certain musicians, too exclusively devoted to art, and wanting, perhaps, a comprehensive sense of the sublime in sound, possesses a great power. “As for the music,” says Madame de Sévigné, speaking of the funeral office for the Chancellor Séguier, “it is a thing that cau-

* Lornin, Hist. de Cluny, 167.

‡ Confess. ix. 4.

VOL. VII.

+ Hym. Mat. Sab.

§ Par. 23.

not be explained. Baptiste Lulli had made a supreme effort. This fine *Miserere* was rendered still grander. There was a *Libera* which filled all eyes with tears. I do not believe that the music of heaven can be different from what we heard*." Chateaubriand, who cites the passage, adds, "Gluck and Piccini certainly never obtained a more flattering testimony than this. Nevertheless, this is the music which the modern artists called the plain chant, the heavy psalmody of Lulli. But these persons who fall into ecstasies at the figured music, and who speak with such pity of that of Lulli—have they more wit, more tact, more sensibility than Madame de Sévigné? All these eyes filled with tears in the illustrious age of our renown, amidst the universal perfection to which art was then carried constitute a fact. The hyperbole which concludes this passage shows the prodigious effect of the old music. What more can we do? Shall we say, that if Madame de Sévigné lived in our times, she would like only our music, and that she would laugh at what had made her weep †?" However, this solemn chant was not the only harmony heard under monastic roofs. It is well known that many of the religious were great composers and great artists in regard to figured music.

"The journeying peasant, thro' the secret shade,
 Heard their soft lyres engage his list'ning ear;
 And haply deem'd some courteous angel play'd;
 No angel play'd, but might with transport hear.
 For these the sounds that chase unholy strife!
 Solve envy's charm, ambition's wretch release!
 Raise him to spurn the radiant ills of life;
 To pity pomp, to be content with peace.
 Farewell, pure spirits! vain the praise we give,
 The praise you sought from lips angelic flows;
 Farewell! the virtues which deserve to live,
 Deserve an ampler bliss than life bestows."

But leaving this theme, now as significative of the sanctity which reigns within these walls, we ought to hear somewhat respecting the mystic side of the monastic character, and the visions and prophetic gifts which sometimes formed or preserved it. It will be sufficient to attend to a few of the old authors, who give their evidence with great simplicity. And if any should be disposed to think that we are observing things altogether past, obsolete, and useless, let him attend to the remark of one of the most energetic advocates of progress now living, who concludes an eloquent paragraph with these words: "When all is said and done, the rapt saint is found the only logician."

* Lett. 1672.

† *Mém. d'outre T.*, ii. 123.

Friar Weston, commenting on the rule of St. Francis, says that "the ninth degree of seraphic love is deformity; there is then made," he continues, "in the soul a deluge of mysterious and adorable love, which surpasses all human thoughts, all earthly affections; which flies to the superior region of man, which hides all that is eminent in science, transcendent in virtue, great in imagination, and which causes the spirit to forget itself, and to look on nothing but heaven*." The examples related in confirmation of such views are indeed striking. "In the year 1265," says Crusenius, "lived Erthinodus the Goth, an Augustinian hermit, a man of prayer, and having the gift of prophecy, full of miracles, who sometimes used to see Christ as suffering under Pontius Pilate, and felt the like grief, at least in part, as if he saw him; then, soon after, he would see Christ in glory rising, and feel the first grief dispelled by the mighty joy†." When Rodolph, king of the Romans, died, and prayers were offering up for the election of a successor, the same day and hour when the election was made, St. Gertrude, in a distant country, announced the event to the mother of her monastery‡. "Master Absalon, a learned man," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, and canon in the monastery of St. Victor at Paris, "was lately elected abbot of Sprenkirsbach, a monastery in the diocese of Treves. Before the event, one of the brethren saw in a dream by night the same Absalon entering the monastery, carrying a lighted taper, at which all the brethren lighted their tapers, which had gone out in their hands, and he interpreted this as foreshowing the restoration of discipline by his means§." Hæftenus cites the Abbot Joachim as one of those belonging to his order who had the gift of prophecy; with his name as occurring in the visions of Dante, many are familiar; but similar instances abound in monastic annals.

Sometimes it is the monk who is the subject of such visions. Cæsar of Heisterbach cites an example. "In the church of St. Mary ad Gradus, in Cologne, there was," he says, "a canon named Gerard, young and given to worldly vanities. On a certain festival in that church, Everard, the parish priest of St. James, a just and religious man, revered by the whole city for his sanctity, coming to the door of the choir, and looking in, beheld Gerard standing in the habit and tonsure of a Cistercian monk amongst his fellow-canons; he wondered greatly, and concluded from the vision that it was a foreshowing of what was to come. In fact, a short time after, to the great astonishment of many, the same Gerard bade adieu to the world, and took the habit in

* Ch. x. 17.

† Id. pars iii. c. 3.

‡ Insin. div. piet. seu vit. ejus, lib. i. c. 3.

§ Lib. iv. c. 89.

Hemmenrode. When the priest Everard heard of it, he came to the monastery and related what he had seen; and this was told to me by the monk Frederick, who was present during the visit of the holy man*." St. Francis, and also Leonard, a hermit of Camaldoli, had often predicted to Gregory IX., when he was cardinal of Ostia, and making a retreat in that hermitage, that he would become Pope. In the ninth century, St. Eusebius, an Irish monk at St. Gall, was known to be endowed with a prophetic spirit, living with the abbot's permission, as a solitary hermit on the mountain of St. Victor, where emperors and kings used to consult him†. "In the monastery of Hemmenrode," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, "there was a convert brother named Herman, who was appointed to the plough of a certain graenge, a man of most pure life, receiving many consolations secretly from God, some few of which came to our knowledge. Among the cattle he had a ferocious ox which was said to have suddenly become gentle and tractable, as if supernaturally moved by his sanctity. Even in his last sickness he retained his wonted cheerfulness and hilarity. 'Ah! brother Herman,' said the Abbot Gisilbert, coming to visit him as he lay on his bed, 'you are always for saying witty things;' for his face seemed naturally disposed to laughing. He predicted his own death to the day and hour, and even to the words of the mass that the priest would be saying at the moment, and this from an announcement made to him in a vision by the blessed Virgin‡." Extraordinary visions, to which this last sentence alludes, are also related as having been granted to the inmates of these houses. "There was," says the same author, "in our order a certain physician, a monk more in habit than in life, through occasion of medicine travelling through many provinces, and scarcely ever, excepting on the chief solemnities, returning to the monastery. On one of these festivals he had a vision of our Lady regarding him with displeasure, and from that day he would never leave the monastery unless when constrained by obedience§." "In a house of our order in Spain, called Pumanne, there was," he says again, "a youth of great sanctity whose life was an example to many. His devotion to the blessed Virgin could be discerned from the manner in which he chanted her office. In his seventeenth year, falling sick, the Mother of God appeared to him, and, putting her arms round his neck, announced that he was to die in seven days. He revealed this to the brother who attended him, and the event fulfilled the prediction. This was related by the Lord Arnold, Cistercian

* Illust. Mirac. et Hist. Memorab. lib. i. c. 7.

† Bueclinius, Chronolog. Constant.

‡ Lib. vii. c. 52.

§ vii. c. 48.

abbot of Treves, who said that it had happened while he was abbot of that house*." "In a monastery," he says elsewhere, of which I have often spoken, as one of the priests of the house related to me, on the feast of Christmas, the brethren preparing themselves to communion, being about to receive the peace after the Agnus Dei, being prostrate on the ground, one of the monks saw the boy Jesus, yet not as recently born, but as if suffering on the cross, when, as judging himself unworthy to receive the communion, he withdrew to an upper stall, indicating by signs that he would not communicate†." Pope Innocent IX., when a cardinal, went to visit a holy hermit. Finding the door shut, and hearing no sound within, he caused his attendants to force it open, when he found the holy man prostrate as if dead. Having raised him up, he recovered his senses, and then said that he had had a vision of souls passing to the other world, and that he had distinguished three that entered heaven, namely, the soul of the bishop, that of the prior of the Carthusians, and that of a widow of the next town; all which persons had then departed life. A Carthusian monastery was afterwards built upon the spot. "Brother Hugo of Lacerta, at Muret, hearing mass, beheld," say the annals of his order, "St. Stephen of Grandmont serving as deacon and resplendent with light, who, stretching out his hands to him with a smile, seemed to invite him to leave the world, from which in effect he departed a few days afterwards‡." Sometimes we are told of visions having occurred to others for the protection of the house or its inmates. The chronicles of the Order of Mercy relate a remarkable instance in the case of St. Pierre du Chemin, martyr, who was born on the banks of the Garonne in a hamlet of the landes of Bourdeaux. He kept the flocks of his parents, and used continually to pray in the fields watching them. One day, while reading, three of his goats rambled and escaped his notice, and, while running after them, he was arrested by a vision of the blessed Virgin, who disclosed to him the danger that threatened a neighbouring convent; and it was in consequence of the communication which the child then made to it that the house was preserved. At other times the miraculous intercourse of which we find mention, is said to have been attended with some external phenomenon which fell within the observation of others. Thus, at the moment when St. Francis received the stigmata, it is said that the shepherds who watched their flocks round the mountain of Alvernia saw the light over it§. In general, however, we are told that it is only manifested outwardly by an increase of virtue, or of consolation in

* vii. 51.

† Levesque, 1.

† ix. c. 41.

§ Spec. Vit. S. F. 89.

the person who experiences it. In the life of Marina de Escobar it is related that one day St. Benedict appeared to her entering her room, and that then, sitting down, he explained how he was charged by God to console her with a short spiritual sermon*. No doubt many of these holy men and women felt on each festival as if the saint in whose memory it was instituted visited them personally and preached to them thus.

But we must hear also attested instances of supernatural assistance granted to the religious houses. Thus of monasteries miraculously supplied with needful provision of food, examples are recorded. In the life of St. Peter of Alcantara one of these occurs in the judgment, at least, of his biographer, who relates it with great simplicity as follows:—"One winter towards the end of December such a quantity of snow had fallen that the convent became inaccessible; and though there was nothing in the house to eat the fathers could not go out to beg. That night after matins, shortly before high mass, one heard with astonishment the gate bell sounded. The porter ran thinking that it was some shepherd or peasant who sought shelter, but on opening the door, he found two baskets, one of bread and the other of meat, and no track on the snow of the person who had left them†." St. Isaacus, in his book "*De Contemptu Mundi*," speaks of the angels being associated with hermits inhabiting the desert, in caves of the earth, of their often having saved them from the fall of rocks, and delivered them from temptations and consoled them; and our old English authors mention examples of the wonderful familiarity of angels with hermits in their desert solitude. Guthlake, in dying, declared that from his first engaging in that state, every morning and evening he enjoyed the presence of an angel, and he charged Berteline to reveal this only to his sister Pega and to the anachorite Egbert. The wisest men of those times, when hearing such attestations, were content with saying, "In all this heaven hath some further ends than we can pierce."

But now, leaving these narratives, which are, perhaps, less calculated to direct men like ourselves, living according to "the way of the world," let us remark another hand stretched out which can guide the most short-sighted of those who pass by; for the attention of all observers must be excited by the humility of this kind of life, which corresponds so well with what was to be expected from wise men, for he that knows most, knows most how much he wanteth, and, above all, from those who wished to practise even the counsels of Christ. In the woods one is pleased at meeting the variety which is formed by lofty and lowly trees; by the box-tree, for example,—that little pale

* P. ii. lib. ii. c. 33.

† Marchese, chap. ix.

tree, quiet, humble, gentle, "silentio quodam, et duritie ac pallore commendabilis," as Pliny says*. In the world one can be no less attracted by the analogous qualities presented in the monastic character, that can easily submit to taste lowest reproof without contempt or words. What a variety, from the general aspect of the forest of life, appears, for instance, in the patience of a Louis Legionensis, that Augustinian and renowned doctor of Salamanca, who, after two years' imprisonment by the inquisition, on the day of his triumphant return to the schools, being conducted to his lecture room with public honour, the crowd carrying before him palms and laurels, began his discourse with "Dicebamus hesternæ die." It is such men who realize the saying of a modern author, "that every step so downward is a step upward, and that the man who renounces himself comes to himself by so doing." An ancient father defines the monastic state as "prosternendi et humiliandi hominis disciplina," and its definition by a great monastic director is expressed in conformity to this view in the lines—

"Mens humilis, mundi contemptus, vita pudica,
Sanctaque sobrietas, hæc faciunt monachum †."

An historian of the Benedictines remarks, that in the early ecclesiastical canons, before monks were priests, the order of precedence determined that the place of the abbot was after the lowest of those who received minor orders, as the ostiarius ‡. All monastic rules requiring humility of heart as a foundation, lay it even down "so that," to use their words, "the humility of this state may confound the pride of others, its patience extinguish the anger of its neighbours, its obedience silently reproach the indolence of others, its fervour excite the tepidity of others §." They all require humility of discourse, "non exeat verbum grande de ore monachi ne suus grandis pereat labor ||;" and, in fine, humility of exterior generally, for the twelfth grade of humility, as St. Benedict says, "is to indicate externally to all who see them the humility of the heart, that is, in work, in the monastery, in the church, in the garden, on the road, in the field, whether sitting, walking, or standing, and all this through that perfect charity which casts out fear, so that all acts are performed from custom as if naturally, without an effort, not through fear, but through the love of Christ, good custom, and delight in virtue."

* xvi. 28.

† Hæftenus, Œcon. Monast. lib. iii. 8.

‡ Dist. 93, Cass. a Subdiacono ap. Yepes.

§ Regula Solitariorum, xxi. ap. Luc. Holst. Cod. Reg.

|| Reg. S. Columbani, c. 5, ap. id.

This humility strikes strangers from the moment when they reach the portal and accost the brother who has charge of the gate. According to the express rule of St. Benedict, the porter, when any one knocked, or when a poor person entreated, was to be affable, "*cum omni mansuetudine timoris Dei reddat responsum festinanter, cum fervore charitatis.*" Dom Mabillon, on arriving at Corby, was made porter to that monastery, which office he discharged with earnest zeal, and we may be sure in the true spirit of his founder's rule. The same feature of the monastic character forces itself on a stranger's notice all through the house. "Wheresoever the brethren be," says Friar Weston, "and shall meet one another, let them show themselves one towards the other as domestics *." You cannot walk through the monastery without being struck by the air of humility which, down to the minutest details, pervades it. Lacordaire remarks how, "at the sound of a bell, all the doors of the long passages in that which he was visiting opened with a sort of gentleness and respect." The walls and furniture, whatever may seem to have been the founder's intentions, bespeak the simplicity of the poor. One observes no exquisite trifles and costly fragility such as are thought necessary in secular houses; for, as Pliny says, "*hoc argumentum opum, hæc vera luxuriæ gloria existimata est, habere quod posset statim totum perire †.*" So also in the customs and government of the house, as also in the treatment of strangers, one can detect no trace of men raised to a position above their birth, intelligence, and heart, clinging to every fibre of authority, and of what might give an idea of social elevation. This waste kind of antic sovereignty would be deemed by them to betray a barrenness of noble nature. Let upstarts exercise uncomely roughness, clear spirits will be humble. The proverb "Wait for you as monks wait for their abbot," refers to an instance; for it means not to wait at all, since monks begin dinner at the moment appointed by the rule whether the superior arrives or not ‡. From these houses, as we remarked in the beginning, emanate thoughts which tend to produce the true and only equality attainable in this life, and manners which show, by a persuasive contrast, the folly of those who suffer social distinctions to obliterate all practical love for humanity and all familiar intercourse with the low. St. Paulinus Nolanus might well say that the worldly notions of grandeur tend to lessen the estimate of man's value.

"*Namque ubi corporeæ curatur gloria pompe
Vilescit pretio deprecatus homo.*"

* c. vi. 10.

† N. H. xxxiii. 2.

‡ Le Roux de Lincy, Livre des Proverbes.

As we before observed, it is not so here. The humility of the monastic state is apparent from the very circumstance of its comprising all ranks, as in the beginning it received equally the free man and the slave. St. Benedict says expressly, "The abbot ought not to prefer free men, 'ingenuos,' to those of a servile condition; for we are all one in Jesus Christ." "With God," says the rule of St. Isidore, "all who are converted to Christ are counted to be of one order. For it differs not whether from poverty or from a servile condition any one comes to the service of God, or whether from a rich and noble condition. Many from a plebeian state are made superiors to nobles, and they of the lowest rank are estimated as the first in merit*." Another rule says, "If a man should come to the gate of the monastery with a servant and ask to be received, —et si voluerit de suis servis secum in monasterio conducere, noverit jam non eum servum habere, sed fratrem, ut in omnibus perfectus inveniatur homo ille†. It was one of the most remarkable attributes of the Benedictine order that birth was never counted as ground of admissibility to honours even in the palmy days of Cluny‡. The list of the mitred abbots in England when they were suppressed shows that the great majority of the heads of houses were of the people§. In particular localities, where attention to nobility of birth seemed to be paid, contrary to the primitive and fundamental principle of monastic life, the abuse was denounced by all its guides as an evil which would subvert the whole character of the institution.

Thus, the great historian of the Benedictines, Antonio De Yepes, remarking that Holland possessed five monasteries of his order, in which persons of plebeian blood were not admitted, adds, "quem morem nos haud probamus; nam Deus nobiles, ignobiles, divites, pauperes nullo discrimine habet; solis virtute ac vitio nos distinguit ||." On the other hand, the rich, coming to these institutions, were not to be humbled so as to fill the poor, reaping benefit from them, with pride; and in the very rule itself of solitaries, an instance is related to show the necessity of guarding against this danger. "An Egyptian," it says, "visited a Roman hermit, who had lived twenty-five years in the desert of Scitem, and finding him wearing sandals and soft raiment, and using a pillow, he was scandalized; and the Roman hermit told his servant who lived with him to prepare herbs and to pour out wine for their guest; and the next morning the Egyptian departed without being edified; and the old Roman wishing to cure his mental disease sent after him, and asked him respecting

* Reg. S. Isid. c. 4.

† Lorain, Hist. de Cluny.

‡ Chron. Gen. ii. 422.

† Regula SS. Patrum, cap. viii.

§ Disraeli, Sibyl.

his country and former mode of life, and hearing that he had been a rustic labourer, and inured to hardship from his infancy, he related to him what had been his own condition,—how he had filled a great post in the imperial palace of Rome; how he had renounced magnificent houses for that poor cell, and precious furniture, and costly raiment, and sumptuous fare, and troops of domestics, and bands of music, in order to live as he found him in the desert; and the Egyptian was confounded in his own eyes, and acknowledged his rashness, and ever after revered the old Roman hermit as his instructor and his guide *.” “Let not the poor,” says the rule of St. Augustin, “be lifted up in monasteries by the advantages they enjoy there, lest monasteries should come to be useful to the rich, who are humbled there, and not to the poor. On the other hand, let not those who seem to be somewhat in the world hold in disdain their brothers who come to that holy society from poverty; let them boast not of the dignity of their rich relations, but of the company of their poor brethren †.” Repeatedly it is found necessary in monasteries to adjust the balance of humility and equality by depressing, not those born to nobility and riches, but those who came to them from the lowest classes. So in another rule we read—“It is shameful that those who had not should seek in the monastery what they cannot remember to have left; therefore they should not esteem themselves happy because they find in the monastery what they could not find without it, or contract pride because they are associated with those whom formerly they could not have approached on account of their wealth or the splendour of their birth, but they should raise up their hearts, and seek not frail and perishable things. For when the rich are humbled the poor must not be inflated, lest monasteries should begin to be more useful to the former than to the latter. On the other hand, those who were rich in the world should be careful to receive graciously those who come to the house from poverty, and to rejoice in the society of such persons ‡.” Caesar of Heisterbach says—“no one doubts but that conversion in the form of humility pleases God, and yet the ostentation of secular glory is only to be estimated according to the intention of the person converted; for some come to the monastery still attended with worldly pomp, fearing lest otherwise they might be repulsed as mere wanderers §.”

But let us now proceed to observe a few instances of the humility of the monastic character, as we find them related in the ancient books. It is one of our earliest poets whose words,

* Reg. Solit. cap. xlvii.
 ‡ Regula Tarnatensis, c. 14.

† Reg. S. August.
 § i. c. 36.

describing himself, and expressing the humility of the hooded men, may be first noticed : he says,

"I am a monk by my profession
Of Bury, called John Lydgate by my name,
And wear a habit of perfection
Although my life agree not with the same."

St. Stephen of Grandmont denied that he was himself either a regular canon or a monk or a hermit, "following," says his historian, "the humility of the Baptist*," whom he sought to imitate as the great type of his profession, and on whose festival all the priors of the order used to assemble. "In the monastery of Hemmenrode," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, "was a certain monk of great simplicity and holiness, who was of such humility that whenever he met any of the monks he used to contract his sleeves, lest he should touch him with any part of his habit ; and when asked why he did so he replied, 'I am a sinner, and not worthy that I should touch such holy men, or be touched by them †.'" In 1575, at Monte Cassino, Angelo Sangrene, through desire of being hidden, resigned the abbatial dignity in his seventy-fifth year. He lived afterwards, says Dom Gattula, for many years in admirable humility. He so devoted himself to interior things, so despised all worldly cares and occupations, and depressed himself with such simplicity, that all who did not know who he was would have taken him for the most obscure of men ‡. In a certain castle, many persons showing honour to St. Francis, "Let us go hence, said he to his companion ; for here we shall gain nothing, being honoured ; there only is our gain, where we are contradicted and neglected §."

Marina d'Escobar, relating incidents of her own life, speaks as follows : "In August, 1622, I beheld a vision of a Dominican father and twelve brethren, who approached my bed, and demanded, saying, 'Sister, how shall we apply to our order the words of our Lord,—Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,' and I replied, 'How, holy father, can you ask that from me, a poor rude woman?' But the saint replied, 'Be not restrained by humility, but answer my question, for God often chooses the weak of the world to confound the strong, and God will speak by your tongue.' Then I said, 'I think, holy father, that to follow Christ our Lord is to imitate him, treading in his footsteps, and taking the way of the cross and of humility and contempt of the world, and when that is done our Lord's promise will be immediately fulfilled, that he will make you fishers of men.' I thought that the saint then said, 'You have answered

* Levesque, Annal. Grand. i.

† Hist. Cass. xi. 68.

‡ vii. c. 16.

§ Spec. vit. B. F. 51.

well ;' and turning to the others with a smile said, ' Do this, and imbue men with this doctrine *.' " Father James de Luna, of the Order of Mercy, who had been repeatedly sent to Africa to redeem captives, secluded himself wholly in his chamber, in which, to preserve his humility, he had written in great letters five sentences of St. Bonaventure, which were counsels to consider, first, what was below him, secondly what was within him, thirdly, the merits of his neighbour, fourthly, the goodness of God, and, fifthly, the benefits he had received from him †. The venerable father, Michel Carmel, of the convent of Barcelona, of the same order, was, we are told, dead to all things of pride in general, even to his own reputation, which he chose to abandon to the darts of venomous calumny, rather than say a single word to make his innocence appear ‡. Father Francis Zumel, public professor in the university of Salamanca, raised to the charge of general of the Order of Mercy in 1593, used often to repeat and apply to himself the words of St. Bernard, who, alluding to his being abbot, as St. Benedict had been before him, would cry out, " Abbas ille, abbas et ego : sed ô abbas, et abbas § ! "

" The blessed brother, Gonzalez Diaz d'Amaranthe, of the convent of the same order at Lima, in Peru, never forgot." say its historians, " his first occupation of a sailor, which memory preserved him in humility against the temptations of pride which his admirable success as a spiritual teacher might have suggested : he used to say that his words could move no one, as he was but a rough sailor who had past the greatest part of his life on ship-board with people as rude as himself, who could only talk about cords, and masts, and helms ||." Cardinal Bona, speaking of Antonio Monelia, of the Order of Minors, styles him " vir magnus inter mysticos, sed fere incognitus ¶." Monasteries possessed many such men. St. Gregory of Tours, says that Salvius, while a simple monk, had often convinced himself that it would be much better for him to remain hidden among monks than to receive the title of abbot among the people **. King Alphonso, meeting Brother Peter of Valladolid, of the Order of the Trinity, said publicly to him, " Ask what you will, for I am resolved to raise you to some great dignity ; " to whom Peter answered with great humility and modesty, " The highest dignity that I expect from your majesty is, that you will permit me to receive death in my cell ††." Instances are related to show

* P. i. lib. iv. c. 22.

† Hist. de l'Ord. de la Mercy, 8vo, 394.

‡ Id. 462.

§ Id. 480.

|| Id. 764.

¶ Via Compend. ad Deum.

** Hist. lib. vii.

†† Baron. Annal. 202.

that it was even the desire of humility which led men to become monks. Thus in the "Magnum Speculum" we read as follows: "A certain great victorious knight became a brother with the Minor Friars, and when his former comrades derided him for entering such an order, asking why he did not rather become a Templar, he replied, 'I still feel the movements of pride; and how much more should I if I beheld my feet iron, and myself mounted on a war horse? Hitherto I have been brave enough attacking others, henceforth I wish to be courageous in fighting with myself*.' " In fine, the humility of the cloister breathes in its literary productions, its authors appearing generally more inclined to collect from others than to present their own reflections; like Raban Maur, who was so addicted to quotations that his critics reproached him for it, saying that he thought more by the mind of others than by his own†. The humble style of the learned French Benedictines of the age of Louis XIV. has been often noticed. This disposition breathes in their great literary works and in their familiar letters. So Mabillon, writing to Sergardi, after relating the diversity of opinion which prevailed respecting certain events of the day, adds, "Ego vero, qui ab aulicis speculationibus longe absum conectoris officio fungi nolo‡." These men of prodigious acquirements are wisely silent also as to their own worth; and they who would draw them out are often strangely baffled. "You are well skilled in history," some one says to them. "Nay; a mere novice," is the reply. They could perchance discourse from Adam downward, "but what's that to history? All that they know is only the origin, continuance, height, and alteration of every commonwealth. But they have read nothing—nothing, alas! to one that's read in histories." "You are expert in the natural sciences?" "Far from it I; have some insight, but no more." They can invent lenses, clocks, gunpowder, windmills; but experimental philosophy owes them nothing. They can explain theorems; but these are trifles to the expert that have studied. Every one says that they can speak many languages; but they may err who say so; "something, Sir, perchance I have, but 'tis not worth the naming." "You are a poet, too?" "The world may think so, but it is deceived, and I am sorry for it." Such is all the self-applause that can be extorted from these men. "You need not, noble Sir," they will conclude, "be thus transported, or trouble your invention to express your thought of us; the plainest phrase and language that you can use will be too high a strain for such an humble theme."

It would be well, perhaps, for the world itself if this spirit

* 634.

† Raban, *Præfat. in Ezech.*

‡ *Lett. cclix.*

were retained by literary men and philosophers; for there is a luminary that hangs in the air, not fixed to the roof of heaven. Man may shine a star; but in seeking admiration he should take heed not to prove a comet, a prodigious thing snatched up to blaze, and be let fall again upon our eyes that so mistook the region where he was placed. Certainly in a world where pride is the meat and drink of many, their library and their religion, there is supplied in the monastic humility in general a great signal. Hear what says a modern advocate of progress: "Is a man boastful and knowing, and his own master, we turn from him without hope; but let him be filled with awe and dread before the Vast and the Divine, which uses him, glad to be used, and our eye is riveted. What a debt is ours," he continues, "to that old religion which taught privation, self-denial, sorrow! that a man was born, not for prosperity, but to suffer for the benefit of others*!"

In union with the monastic humility we should observe the spirit of poverty which accompanied it. We have already seen how these institutions are favourable to that equality of condition which, after all is said and done, has such a charm for those who possess manly minds and true benevolence; and how, at the same time, they are free from the folly of those sophists who seek by violence or legislation to accomplish what is impossible. On the wall of the refectory in the monastery of St. Mary ad Nemos, there were certain sentences inscribed, of which one was to be read aloud every day in the week before sitting down to table. The lines for Wednesday were an injunction to remember the condition in regard to food of the lower classes. "*Cogita multos esse pauperes, Dei filios, et confratres tuos, qui inter magnas collocarent delicias ea, quæ soles fastidire †.*" In the religious houses that were richly endowed, the sons and daughters of the poor common people were received as members of the community without any compensation or dowers. A decree of the Council of Tours is to this effect: "*Prohibemus ne ab iis qui ad religionem transire voluerint, aliqua pecunia requiratur ‡.*" The decree of the Lateran Council lays down the same obligation: "*Monachi non pretio recipiantur in monasterio §.*" Where means were deficient, we find express provision made for enabling monasteries to receive postulants from among poor people. Thus, the donation of Drusingus, a priest to the Benedictin monastery of Hensdorf, is made "in order to supply veils for clothing such indigent nuns

* Emerson.

† *Optica Regularium Spec. xx.*

‡ *Ap. Guil. Neub. Rer. Anglic. ii. 10.*

§ *Id. ii. 3.*

as could not furnish the means when they applied for admission, lest the poor and orphans there should be wanting what was needful*.” Cæsar of Heisterbach says, that some became monks to escape from the misery of indigence. The abuse at least proves that the monastic state furnished a relief to persons who would otherwise have been in distress. “As sickness,” he says, “induces many to come to the order, so poverty compels many others. We daily see knights and citizens coming to us more from necessity, wishing to escape the notice of rich relations. I remember one in particular, who told me that if he had continued to enjoy prosperity in the world, he would never have come to the order†.” Yet the ancient monasteries were often in reality poor, and the abodes of the poor. “Our order,” says Cæsar of Heisterbach, “is often accused of avarice by seculars; but we call prudence what they call avarice; for we are bound to receive, as if Christ, to hospitality all who come to us, and if we refused them, they who now charge us with avarice would then accuse us of impiety and cruelty. There is hardly any house of the order which is not involved in debt on account of the expenses attending our care of strangers, guests, the poor, and those who daily come to conversion, and who cannot be refused without scandal; and so far I hold that our dispensers are to be excused‡.” “In Spain,” says Antonio de Yepes, “the monasteries are few and poor if compared with those of Germany and France, which are generally the most opulent§.” “They cannot,” he says, “be compared with the monasteries of France in riches or greatness; only in sanctity and discipline they yield to no other||.” Yet even in France and Germany the majority resembled any thing rather than the luxurious residences that they are often thought to have been. Within buildings, sometimes indeed vast and beautiful, the monk frequently inhabited a little room no larger than St. Dunstan’s, which was five feet long, and only as high as a man. Superfluity, however, in buildings was an abuse which the Cistercians lamented in their order¶. The first Cistercians built their monastery of wood alone**. St. Isidore of Damietta, writing to Thion expressly against monks who are fond of building, said, “Consider, I beseech you, the poverty of Elisha, and the little which contented him, namely, a small cell and a lamp. Far was he from wanting immense edifices.” Sometimes, through a love of poverty, which is praiseworthy even when it seems to lead to exaggerated

• Thuringia Sacra, 335.

† Cæsar. Heist. Illust. Mer. et Hist. Mem. i. c. 28.

‡ iv. c. 57.

§ Chron. Gen. i. 384.

|| Id. ii. 204.

¶ Ex Vita Virorum Illust. Ord. Cist.

** Aubertus Mireus, Chronic. Cisterciens. ii.

results, the monks rejected paintings. "Always simple and humble," says the historian of the convent of St. Sauveur d'Aniane, "these holy monks would have no paintings on the walls or ceilings of the monastery *." Pictures, however, were no proof of wealth in the monastery which possessed them, since they were often the result of gratuitous labour by artists who devoted some portion of their time, through piety, to adorn these houses. On every festival day during twenty years Benvenuto Garofolo worked for the love of God, and accepting no payment for his labour, at the convent of San Bernardino at Ferrara, where he executed many works of importance in oil, in tempera, and in fresco. The same is related of many other great painters who were often attached to the monks of the poorest communities. William, abbot of St. Thierry, speaking of St. Bernard, says, "When one descended the mountain and was about to enter Clairvaux, one recognized the presence of God in this monastery; and the mute valley announced by the simplicity of the buildings the humility of the poor of Christ. No one was idle, all laboured in silence. Such reverence was inspired in the mind of the seculars who came there, that they feared to utter not alone things bad or useless, but even less serious and grave. Though many were there, each lived as if in solitude, for as when a man of disordered mind, even when alone is, as it were, in a crowd, so here for the contrary reason, each was alone amidst his brethren."

"To cut off all occasions of cupidity we decree," say the Carthusians, "that beyond the limits of our desert we must possess nothing; neither lands, nor vineyards, nor gardens, nor churches, nor cemeteries, nor oblations, nor tenths, nor any thing of the kind †." "Our brethren," say the Dominicans, "must never at their preaching collect money for any particular house or person ‡." St. Stephen of Grandmont would not suffer his order to accept of money even for masses; and he exhorts the people to pay tithes regularly to the secular clergy. The fifth chapter of his rule ends with these words, addressed to his monks; "Populis et ecclesiis tam vicinis quam remotis, non amplius noceatis quam arboribus nemoris ubi habitatis." Count Hugo, on entering the order, wished to give all his rights as a count for ever to the priors of Grandmont, but the offer was refused §. In point of fact, the Benedictine communities were often absolutely poor. In the thirteenth century Mathieu Paris says that the cloistered nuns of Sopwelle lead a most austere life in great indigence; that the monks of St. Julian, also, are very poor;

* Vit. S. Ben. Abb. Anian.

† Guig. Stat. c. 41.

‡ Constit. Ord. Frat. Præd. 11.

§ Levesque, Annales Grand. cent. ii.

and that the nuns of St. Mary-of-the-Meadows have hardly means of subsistence. All these were on the lands of St. Albans*. St. Gregory of Tours speaks of the scarcity of wood for firing rendering a winter almost intolerable to religious sisters†. A report made in 1680 by the lieutenant of police, La Reynie, proves that each monk of the congregation of St. Maur expended no more than 437 francs annually, so exact was the discipline of their monasteries. In late years, while a celebrated father of another order was drawing all Paris to his sermons, at which enormous sums for the poor used to be collected, the community was sometimes reduced to an involuntary fast from not having wherewithal to furnish a dinner for its own members. In general the spirit of the monks corresponded with such a state of things. St. Amedée de Haute-rive, having removed from Bonnevaux to Cluny, on occasion of a great festival, was led, by the splendour around him, to repent his having left the poor penitential community. The monks remarking his sadness, suggested to the abbot that they feared he had not been treated with any marks of regard since coming amongst them, and advised him to give him some priory. The abbot, taking him aside, spoke to him according to their advice, but soon discovered that the holy man's concern arose from a very different cause, and with regret consented to his return to Bonnevaux. There he would not re-enter the monastery till he had lain prostrate as a public penitent at the door for fifteen days, when he was only persuaded to enter by the abbot declaring that he would place himself by his side unless he rose and resumed his former occupations in the community‡. "Anselm Marzat, a Capuchin of Monopoli, was elevated to the dignity of cardinal," as Pierre Mathieu says, "by force, weeping bitterly, and protesting against the injury committed against St. Francis and the restoration of his rule. He who has once tasted the sweetness of the cell," adds this historian, "thinks no more of the pomps of the consistory—*qui a vescu en la solitude du capucinage, mesprise les honneurs de la cour*§." "At the monastery of St. Chrysanthus," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, "there was a certain French scholastic, a man of great prudence and science, named Ulrich, who contracted debts in consequence of his scholastic returns not being adequate. Some of the brethren of the Præmonstratensian monastery of Steinveld seeing him a man of great learning, exhorted him frequently to transfer himself to their house for the sake of conversion. At length,

* Ad ann. 1259.

† Lib. ix.

‡ Hist. de plusieurs Saints des Maisons des Comtes de Tonnerre et de Clermont.

§ Hist. de Hen. IV., liv. vii.

divinely inspired, he thus replied: 'I owe debts; if you pay the money I will join you.' The superior of the said monastery hearing this, cheerfully paid the money, and the scholastic immediately removed, changed his habit, and was soon afterwards made superior of the monastery. He, knowing that he had undertaken the care of souls, applied not to the care of flocks or possessions, but to the extirpation of vices, knowing that avarice was the root of all evils and vices. He had a convert brother who in the administration of exterior things was so circumspect and perfect that all things passed through his hands, he alone providing for all the agricultural and domestic concerns. He was all things—neglecting nothing—joining field to field and vineyard to vineyard. The superior observing him, and remembering the Scripture which saith that nothing is more wicked than an avaricious man, called him one day into his presence, and said, 'Do you know, bearded brother, why I came to the order?' As he could not well speak German he used no polished words, but whatever he said to the converts seemed laughable and distorted. The convert replied; 'I know not, my lord.' 'Then I will tell you,' he added, 'I came here in order to weep for my sins. For what purpose did you come?' 'For the same cause, my lord,' said the other. 'Then if so,' added the superior, 'you ought to assume the form of a penitent; that is, you ought to be often in the church, you ought to watch, you ought to fast and pray to God. It is not the part of a penitent to disinherit neighbours, and to congregate thick mud against oneself.' 'But, my lord,' said he, 'all these lands and vineyards are for the perpetual use of the Church.' 'Well, but when you have purchased these, you must needs purchase also those next them, forgetting what the prophet saith,—*Væ qui coniungitis domum ad domum et agrum agro copulatis*. Are you alone in the midst of the earth? But you place no bounds to your avarice: when you have gained all that is in this province, you will cross the Rhine and proceed to the mountains; nor will you rest there, but go on to the sea, and that, I think, will stop you, being so broad and spacious. Remain, therefore, in your cloister, frequent your church, and lament your sins. Wait a little, and you will have earth enough below you and above you and within you—*quia pulvis es et in pulverem reverteris*.' Hearing what had passed, some of the senior brethren said, 'My lord, my lord, if you remove this convert our house cannot subsist.' To whom he answered, 'Better that a house should perish than a soul.' And so he refused their petition. This was indeed a true shepherd, knowing that the sheep committed to him had been redeemed, not with corruptible gold and silver, but with the precious blood of the immaculate Lamb. At the time when Reinold was made

archbishop of Cologne, and there were courts and returns appointed, the same holy man was exhorted from different houses of the Cistercian order to send provident converts to preside in the courts and increase the returns by their industry ; and when he acquiesced, and he was advised to appoint the same convert brother, and when one came and saluted him from the part of the bishop, saying, ' My lord archbishop makes a petition to you which you ought not to refuse,' the other replying, ' It is not for him to ask but to command,' he added, ' he requests that you will appoint that convert brother for the purpose.' Then the superior humbly and meekly, but with constancy, replied, ' I have 200 sheep in such a grange, and so many more in such another, besides oxen and horses. Of these my lord may take as many as he wishes, but he shall have no convert brother committed to my charge for such purposes ; I shall have to give account in the day of judgment, not of sheep and oxen, but of souls committed to me.' And so he refused. Another time he gave a proof of his hatred of avarice. One day, before the same convert brother had been removed from the administration, he came to one of his granges in which he found a beautiful horse, and he asked the brother whose it was and whence it came ; when the convert replied that a certain man, a good and faithful friend of ours, dying, bequeathed it to us. ' Was it through devotion or in conformity with any law ?' asked the superior. ' It became ours by his decease,' replied the other ; ' for his wife, being of our family, offered it *jure curmedæ*.' Then he, shaking his head, replied, ' So because he was a good man and our faithful friend you have robbed his wife ; give back the horse to the woman, for it is rapine to take from another what was not yours before*.' These are ancient examples, but the same spirit ever reigns within many cloisters, as can be witnessed on great as well as small occasions. When the stranger visited the convent of the Visitation, at Annecy, he gave the good man who had gone round the church, drawing aside the curtains and showing him in detail the different objects of interest, who, though a servant, evidently breathed the monastic spirit, a piece of two francs, requesting him to return one of them ; he replied that it would be still far too large a remuneration, and insisted on returning back more than was asked. There was no persuading him to the contrary. St. Jerome said of old, "*Monachus habens obolum non valet obolum.*" No age of the Church is left without communities in which men seek to realize such views of monastic poverty. " Let no monk," says an ancient rule, " be ever heard saying '*codex meus, tabulæ meæ,*' &c. ; but if any

one should use such language, he must do penance for it*." In the thirteenth century whole orders arose to practise evangelical poverty to the letter. "The Minors and Preachers were established," says Mathieu Paris, "in order that they might more freely not caress, but reprove the vices of the powerful, with the authority that suits censors; for 'cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator †.'" St. Francis expressed his intention to Sister Clare in these words: "Ego frater Franciscus parvulus, volo sequi vitam et paupertatem altissimi Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et ejus sanctissimæ matris et perseverare in ea usque ad finem." His brethren were to accept no money: "Nec accipiant aliquam pecuniam, nec per se, nec per interpositam personam ‡." "Unde nullus fratrum ubicunque sit et quocunque vadit, aliquo modo tollat nec recipiat, nec recipi faciat pecuniam aut denarios §." The blessed James of Marchia was thrice sent, in quality of apostolical legate, into remote countries upon important affairs of the chair by three several popes, Eugene IV., Nicholas V., and Calixtus III., and yet never made use of money. He travelled through Italy, Germany, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Saxony, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Bohemia, Prussia, Russia, Bosnia, Croatia, and other vast regions, whose languages he understood not, without having recourse to money; but Providence never failed to supply his wants ||. The Franciscans must not even put trunks for money at the doors of the sacristy or church ¶. From the Franciscan houses was to be banished every thing that looks curious, rich, or that has any appearance of ostentation. In all things the friars were to be like poor men; they were to have the plainest tables, the meanest chairs, the poorest ink-horns, the coarsest paper, and the cheapest of every thing **. The pope's holiness, moreover, is the absolute master and proprietor of all things given to the order of St. Francis ††. The founder taught the friars to have poor houses, built of wood or clay, not of stone ‡‡. The poverty of the convent erected for them by St. Peter of Alcantara, near Pedrosa, was in accordance with their rule. The square cloister was so small that two friars with arms extended could join hands across it. The beds, of three planks in breadth, occupied the half of each cell. The doors were so low that no one could enter them without stooping. The chapels in the church were so small that not more than one person could remain with the priest and him who served the mass. The whole space of

* Regula S. Fructuosi, cap. iv.

† Ad ann. 1253.

‡ Regula S. Francisci, cap. ii.

§ Ibid. cap. iii.

|| Weston on the Rule of the Minors, iv.

¶ Ibid. c. iv. 4.

** Ibid. iv. 12.

†† Ibid. iv. 10.

‡‡ Spec. Vit. S. Fran. v. ix.

ground occupied by the church and convent, comprising the thickness of the walls, was only thirty-two feet in length and twenty-eight in breadth *. St. Peter of Alcantara accepting the foundation of a convent in the diocese of Zamorra, by his letters to the magistrates, long preserved, declared that he received their gift as made to God for the service of poor men, pilgrims like himself, who could possess nothing ; and, in proof, he promised them to place on a certain day every year the keys of this convent in their hands, in order that they might do what they pleased with them, either retain or give them back to their community †. On one occasion, being in his convent near Pedrosa while the snow rendered it inaccessible, the community had nothing to eat but a crumb each for dinner. It is added, indeed, that the saint's prayers for succour were heard ; for while he read to them at table a young man of the village named Serradille, twelve miles from Pedrosa, came to the gate with bread and fish, asparagus and oil, which with great difficulty he had amassed for the purpose of presenting to them. When Henry VIII.'s officials came to the convent of Coventry to inquire into their means, the friars answered that they always lived on alms, without any rents at all. The Franciscans of England, in general, subsisted chiefly on a charitable and free donation of five pence once in three months from every house or family, as Speed relates from the royal records ‡.

Such, then, is the humility, joined with a spirit of contented poverty, that belongs to the religious orders ; and certainly, let the character of the age be what it may in regard to civilization, it presents to every thoughtful person a most remarkable phenomenon. In fact, what can be more surprising than to find learned and magnanimous men, who might have enjoyed honour and affluence, living thus from choice, laboriously, usefully employed, contentedly, cheerfully, and without affectation, like the poorest of the common people ? Speaking of the mendicant orders, Lenormant says : " I heed not the declamations of a chimerical science respecting that principle of a precarious existence, which was the soul of the religious orders that were founded in the thirteenth century. The poor man, who suffers perhaps more from humiliations than from want, will always lend a more attentive and confiding ear to him who will have voluntarily embraced his own state of difficulties arising from poverty §."

But perhaps, without waiting for further evidence, some one will here already propose an objection, and say, If the members

* Marcilese, Vie de S. P. d'Al. ii. 7.

† Liv. ii. 23.

‡ Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, 220.

§ Des Associations Religieuses, Le Correspondant, tom. vi. Mai, 1844.

of religious orders be virtuous, what is the reason that Englishmen affect them not? Why are they lost to the general opinion, and become rather their hate than love? To answer such a question without feeling the need of retracting any thing, requires no great exercise of ingenuity. It is not certainly that the present brave and generous population of England are bred in such a vile degenerate age, that the world they live in cannot patiently endure the presence of sanctity and goodness. No; as a keen observer says, "a better spirit than exists on most subjects in the English people never existed in any people in the world." And we may remark, too, that many of the features of the monastic character are peculiarly adapted to please them; for that masculine vigour and active intelligence, that unrivalled social knowledge, that severe simplicity of manner, and that true disinterested devotion to the interests of the lower orders which belong to it, are all qualities which the English would appreciate and admire. But the author who so justly eulogizes them would enable us to answer the question; for he adds that this spirit—which, combined as it is with manhood, beauty, fairness, no nation but the English, ever preferring strangers to themselves, can disparage—"has been misdirected and squandered upon party purposes in the most degrading manner." When it was not so, the English people loved these orders. They dislike them now, because they have been told over and over again that they are every thing that we all equally detest. And how should they know the contrary? "It is not," to use Hazlitt's words, "that great and useful truths are not manifest and discernible in themselves; but little dirty objects get between them and us, and, from being near and gross, hide the lofty and distant." Protestantism is the greatest employer of nicknames that ever existed, and "a nickname carries the weight of the pride, the indolence, the cowardice, the ignorance, and the ill-nature of mankind on its side. It acts by mechanical sympathy on the nerves of society." The people at their distance of time and place cannot see these institutions as they are in themselves, but must regard them through the refractions of opinion and prejudice, and consequently cannot avoid seeing them distorted and falsified. Ask any of your acquaintances among the common people—and it were to be wished that every one possessed some friend of this kind, familiarity with whom is better than knowing all the Pharisees in England—why they dislike monks. They will reply that they dislike them for being avaricious and grasping, or for condemning marriage and being opposed to love. They judge only from what they have heard; and they are right in cordially hating what they hate. The mistake lies in their supposing the monastic character to be the very contrary of what

it is : but if the real truth were known to them, and false guides did not take such insufferable pains to ruin what nature has made so incomparably well, they would love and respect these institutions as their forefathers did, and as the same classes still do in countries where they have means of judging for themselves ; for the truth is, that the mistakes of the people are very different in their cause from those of the higher ranks. The common people have, at least, this superiority ; and one loves to repeat the observation of this shrewd observer, "that they always intend to do what is right."

Again ; we may observe the character of temperance, frugality, and, in some respects, of austerity which belongs to the monastic profession. The manly endurance of the monks has often struck literary men with amazement. Thus M. Valéry remarks that during the rigorous winter of 1709, which caused the death of trees and plants, Dom Blampin used never to go near a fire excepting to thaw his ink. The discipline of monks involves a frugal life—a life, in fact, like that of the common mass of mankind, but with an elevated motive. What great harm can there be in this ? "Much of the economy," says an American writer, "which we see in houses is of base origin, and is best kept out of sight. Parched corn eaten to-day, that I may have roast fowl to my dinner on Sunday, is a baseness ; but parched corn and a house with one apartment, that I may be free of all perturbations of mind, that I may be serene and docile to what God shall speak, and girt and road-ready for the lowest mission of knowledge or good-will, is frugality for gods and heroes." Now such, and no other, is the frugality of monks. Peter the Venerable, addressing the Cistercians, says, in allusion to former abuses, "You have banished condescensions which delicacy, rather than necessity, had introduced." And what did they restore ? Only a discipline which even the ancients would have admired. "For the stomach," says Pliny, alluding to its artificial wants, "is the great source of covetousness and suffering to men—*'eujus causa major pars mortalium vivit. Eoque mores venere, ut homo maxime cibo pereat.'* This is the worst of all creditors, calling often in the day. Chiefly on account of this is avarice exercised ; for this is luxury occupied ; for this men navigate to Phasis ; for this the depths of the ocean are explored—*'et nemo utilitatem ejus æstimat, consummationis feditate'*—therefore medicine has on account of this its principal occupation*." Speaking of herbs and fruits, and their property as food, he says : "Observanda sunt, quæ non solum corporum medicinam, sed et morum habent†." In particular, describing the lens vegetable or lenticulas, he says : "Invenio apud auctores æqua-

* N. II. xxvi. 23.

† Ibid. xxii. 51.

nimitatem fieri vescentibus ea*." How the muse of Ovid delights in those innocent and bloodless repasts, while praising the fruits and herbs which Pythagoras prescribed †!

" Quid meruistis, oves, placidum pecus, inque tuendos
Natum homines, pleno quæ fertis in ubere nectar,
Mollia quæ nobis vestras velamina lanas
Præbetis, vitæque magis quam morte juvatis.
Quid meruere boves, animal sine fraude dolisque,
Innocuum, simplex, natum tolerare labores ?"

No extravagance or immoderate hardship was essentially involved in monastic discipline, though some orders judged it expedient for their members to practise abstinence from flesh. Apollonius says to Cæsar of Heisterbach, "The Lord has converted bitter into sweet for me, for our simple dishes of vegetables seem to me now of far better flavour than the most delicate dishes of meat used to taste before my conversion ‡." Neither was there any superstitious association of abstinence with days, though on some the abstinence was general, since exceptional cases were admitted in regard to sickness, wars, and other necessities. The discipline of the Church itself produced them. Thus in 1255, Christmas-day falling on a Friday, Mathieu Paris says that meat was eaten through respect for Christ. The whole was merely a question of discipline and of circumstances, though it was natural for poets to attach importance to customs which agreed with many of their views respecting the happiest life, as when Baptist the Mantuan sung—

" ————— Qui vult
Quod satis est vitæ non inservire palato
Inveniet passim sylvas alimenta per omnes.
Hæc felix est vita hominum scelus ante parentum
Dum pia simplicitas viciata libidine nulla
Non sitiebat opes, sed erant cômunia cunctis
Omnia, dum pure passim, et sine sanguine mensæ
Salve sancta domus, sancti salvete recessus
Sacrorum nemorum, salvete silentia curis
Opportuna piis, ad quæ velut ad sua Tempe
Urbibus antiqui patres fugere relictis."

In 1490 Pope Martin V., shortly before his death, granted privileges to the Franciscans, abating of the rigour of their rule. These grants, however, were not accepted of by the observants, who preferred to live up to every point of their holy founder's prescripts, for which resolution they were commended by his successor, Eugene IV. Nevertheless the Holy See has never

sanctioned immoderate austerity, nor have wise and distinguished men of the monastic order favoured it. Mabillon, speaking of the work of the Abbé de la Trappe, admits "that there are certain passages which seem pushed too far, and that could be rendered more moderate *;" and Dom Germain, alluding to the same work, cites the words of Cardinal Bona to a great monastic reformer, saying, "the fervour of this abbot seems to have in it somewhat of fury †." At all events, if, according to the opinion of common persons, some holy men, and even, perhaps, some communities, have wished to carry things to an irrational excess, Catholicism is not responsible. Some of these directors, exceptional perhaps in the circumstances of their vocation, might use Dantean language, and say of themselves, to account for their severity, that they resembled him who cried—

" Mine eyes with such an eager coveting
Were bent, to rid them of their ten years' thirst,
No, other sense was waking ‡."

Catholicism may bespeak allowance, therefore, for them on the ground of their senses being powerless to interrupt the vision that sustained them. But in the adoption of what sober reason never can commend, the founders of religious orders themselves have detected a culpable desire of singularity. If under the idea of being prepared for places of honour in the next state, men have taxed their ingenuity to deform, and darken, and desolate this—if nature has been outraged, reason dethroned, and the gifts of God rejected, as if it were meritorious to do all one can to prove that the laws of the universe are wrong—Catholicism, accepting and sanctifying only what is wise in the spirit of all ages, does not seem to be answerable for such asceticism. St. Benedict wrote to Martius, who wore a chain, saying, "*Si servus Dei es non te teneat catena ferri, sed catena Christi §.*"

Marina d'Escobar, speaking of immoderate austerities, says, "God wishes not this kind of abstinence, but to abolish in his Church singularities of which he is the enemy ||." Suso, speaking of the austerity of the ancient fathers, and remarking that we should never consider it when viewed apart from the fervour of their love of God, which made all sweet to them, observes also, "that some deemed it best not to practise such rigour, both parties aiming at the same object." "We are not all," he continues, "of the same constitution of body; and what benefits one would injure another. Neither the austere, then, should condemn those who adopt a milder discipline, nor the latter the

* Correspond. Lett. 67. † Ibid. Lett. 78. ‡ ii. 32.

§ Yepes, Chron. Gen. i. ad ann. 545.

|| Vit. ejus, i. c. 7.

austere*." The rule of St. Columban, however, goes further, and declares immoderate abstinence to be a vice—"Si modum abstinentia excesserit vitium non virtus erit †." "In jejuniu hila- res," says the rule of St. Macarius ‡. And after all, the mo- nastic discipline in general involves no endurance but what be- longs to innumerable men in ordinary life. "How many even injure their health by labours in the mines, by literary labour, by the military life, by labours at the bar as an advocate," by speaking and counter-speaking with the voices of citations, appellations, allegations, certificates, attachments, interrogatories, references, convictions and afflictions among doctors and proctors; and yet, says an abbot, no one complains. Only the hardships of a reli- gious discipline are deemed irrational, though their object is the attainment of a high moral and natural, as well as spiritual, end. Besides, these sufferings probably are thought to be far greater than they really are; and therefore the Abbot Eutropius says, "some one complains that we are too strict; but whoever says so—*videtur nobis monasterialem regulam nec nosse penitus, nec intelligere; et per hoc apparet eum non nobis detrudere sed suam imperitiam publicare §.*" Hilario, in Massinger's Picture, when he hears that his lenten fare is to cease, exclaims,

"Tho' a poor snake; I will leap
Out of my skin for joy. Break, pitcher, break,
And wallet, late my cupboard, I bequeath thee
To the next beggar; thou, red-herring, swim
To the Red Sea again."

But it does not appear that the hooded men regretted so keenly the quality of their food at such seasons.

That the fasting and austerity which is approved of by the Church does not shorten life seems an inference from facts. Ethbinus, who was so assiduous in practising them, died in his 83rd year; Samson of Brittany is another example; St. Paul of Leon lived to be 100; St. Machutus to be 103 years old; brother Laurence Firmanus dwelt forty years on Mount Alvernia, passing its sharp winters barefooted, and he lived to the age of 110 ||. In the abbey of St. Claire-fontaine, in Ivelines, was the tomb of a monk who had died in the 105th year of his age ¶. So the poet ascribes to his convertite the words—

"And we'll wear out
In a wall'd convent packs and sects of great ones
That ebb and flow by the moon."

* In Vita ejus.

† Reg. S. Col. 3.

‡ c. i.

§ Eutrop. Epist.

|| Weston, Examples on the Rule of S. Fran. ch. ii. 38.

¶ De Priele, Consid. sur la Vieillesse, 52.

The Baron de Prelle cites an instance of one who, living in the world, merely through regard for his health adopted more than a monastic regimen. "Aloysius Cornelius, of Pavia," he says, "in the last century, never sat down to table without having a pair of scales in his plate, to measure both what he eat and drank, and he lived to the age of ninety-eight, and when he died he departed without pain, as merely worn out, having received the sacraments two days before; afterwards he listened to some father Jesuits discoursing on devotion while he held the crucifix in his hand, which he only laid down to change his position, in which act he expired without a struggle." Had Charles V. attended more to the advice of his ancient and trusty confessor, Loaysa, who protested against rich dishes, or had he dined oftener at the table of the friars in the convent of St. Yuste, whose bad fare, though it did not affect the good humour of his conversation, discouraged him, excepting on rare occasions, from honouring the refectory with his presence, there seems reason to suppose that he might have lived to make his profession among them, and edify them longer with his virtues. However, as if the monastic discipline were designed for all the world, there are now many voices raised against it on the score of its supposed opposition to the lawful and rational enjoyment of mankind. "The idea of a life of solitude and austerity in a monastery fills," says Balmes, "the philosophers with horror. But humanity has other thoughts; humanity feels drawn towards the very objects which the sceptical sophists find so vain, so void of interest, so full of horror, admirable secrets of our heart! Exhausted with pleasures, distracted by the whirlwind of play and laughter, we cannot prevent ourselves from being seized with a profound emotion at the sight of austere manners, and of a recollected soul. Solitude, even sadness exercises on us an ineffable fascination. Whence this enthusiasm, which drives men as if by enchantment to follow the traces of a man whose countenance bears the stamp of reflection and austerity of life, whose habit expresses detachment from all that is earthly, and a forgetfulness of the world? What at first might be thought most repulsive—that shade of sadness which is spread over the solitude of a religious life—is precisely that which attracts us the most. Nothing will be able to move so deeply our heart, and to engrave on it indestructible impressions. The truth is, our soul has the character of an exile; it is affected most by grave objects. Even joy, in order to please, must borrow a tint of melancholy: there must be a tear, a mournful remembrance. Do you desire that a picture of nature or of art should excite strongly our attention? There must be a memento of the nothingness of man, and an image of death. Our heart must be solicited by sentiments of a peaceful melancholy. We love to see sober tints on a ruined monument, the cross recalling the abode of the dead, the walls

covered with moss, and indicating the ancient dwelling of a powerful noble, who, after living a few instants upon the earth, has disappeared. Joy does not satisfy us ; it does not fill our heart. Hence, the art of orators, poesy, sculpture, painting, and music, have constantly followed the same rule, or rather have been always governed by the same instinct*. Strange is it certainly to remark that even the poet of the world, who courts in general the voluptuous muse, should occasionally express the same thoughts as the grave and mystic theologian, exaggerating even the wants of our condition, which can never demand the sacrifice he supposes. It is the author of "Autumnal Leaves" who says, "The tempest then has been terrible ; so that by turns, in haste, and through fear of shipwreck, it has been necessary, in order to lighten your vessel, and prevent it from falling a prey to the black deep, to cast overboard pleasures, liberty, fancy, family, love, treasures, even poetry, all into the sea ; so that, in fine, alone and naked you are obliged to sail solitary at the sport of the waves ; without ever making land, calm, living on little, having in your bark which floats afar, in isolation, only two things left, the sail and the compass, your soul and your God !" Thus can even observers from without recognize the reason for much that offends the world in the austere discipline that is practised within these houses.

Nevertheless, for those who were truly called to embrace it, there can be no doubt but that the monastic was a happy life, and that if its first object was to perform religious duties to heaven, nature had a place beneath them. Talk of its cares, and privations, and sacrifices ! Are you practised in the administration of government, in the cares of fathers, in the duties imposed by society, or in the management of any commercial interest, and disposed to think it more burdened than your own condition ? Why you are yourself sad ; and if one of these religious persons were to demand, like Emanuel, in the "Island Princess :

"——What can grieve or vex you,
That have the pleasures of the world, the profits,
The honour, and the loves at your disposal ?
Why should a man that wants nothing want his quiet ?"

The answer may be often that of Armusia,—

"I want what beggars are above me in, content."

Yes, you who talk of the victims of the cloister, recognize the fact that every condition has its victims. Society has its victims ; the secular worldly life has its victims ; respectability, the love of ease, the pride of families, all have their victims, whose life is bitter as *colocynthis* and the dregs of *aconitum* ! Of course, like every other state, that of religion has its shades and its

temptations, else would it be more happy than betides mortality. "Qui observat ventum non seminat." "The wind," says Cæsar, "is temptation, the sowing is conversion. He who fears too much to be tempted in the order, can scarcely ever be converted to the order. I have known many in the world, both clerks and laies, who had long vowed, and yet did not dare to be converted through fear of temptations. They had the temptations always before their eyes; but they did not consider the multiplied consolations which are in the order. These are great; and hence it is that so many who were before pusillanimous become of heroic fortitude after their conversion*," saying with the poet—

"Long have I sought for rest, and unaware,
Behold I find it! so exalted too!
So after my own heart! I knew, I knew
There was a place untenanted in it;
Now it is full ———."

Of the temptations only the man of the world hears; but the monk will say of his own abode,

"—— let him not come there

To seek out sorrow that dwells every where."

And there are occasions, too, when he may add, "if he cannot conceive what's good for himself, he will worse understand what's good for me." "I have conversed," says Sister de Changy, "with great queens and great princesses, great lords and great dames; but I never saw any that had not under their habits of gold and silver sharp thorns in their heart, or who enjoyed the calm and sweet peace which I discover in our nuns†." This may sound strangely; but "when, dear stranger," we shall hear each of the latter say, "thou seest it for my happiness to be here, no pearl will trespass down those cheeks.

"If I should stay where nothing suits me
And pain my steps amidst these forests too rough,
What canst thou say or do of charm enough
To dull the nice remembrance of my home?
Thou canst not ask me with thee here to roam
Over these hills and vales, where no joy is,—
Empty of what constitutes my bliss!
Thou art a scholar, perhaps too, and must know
That finer spirits cannot breathe below
In misty climes, and live: alas! poor youth,
What taste of purer air hast thou to soothe
My essence? what srenner palaces
Where I may all my many wishes please,
And by mysterious sleights a hundred thirsts appease?
It cannot be—adieu!"

* iv. 48.

† Mém. de S. Jeanne de Chantal, iii. 31.

Quirini entered as a novice into the Order of St. Benedict at an early age. In the following lines he contrasts his own woollen habit with the purple that decorated his family :—

“ Dum Veneto adspicio rutilantem murice patrem
 Dumque pari renitet frater uterque toga,
 Dumve triumphalis resonant spectacula pompæ
 Et geminat plausus Hadria læta suos,
 Haud equitem invidéo, haud tumeo minus ; ipsa Casini
 Vellera sunt oculis ambitiosa meis.”

Joy in the world is often but for a moment,—

“ Light vanity, insatiate cormorant
 Consuming means, soon preys upon it.”

It is not alone great queens and great lords that are found to have this experience when thou shalt untwine their clue of miseries. The common condition of mankind knows no other, and one cannot wonder that some, of natures continually vacillating between bliss and woe, should at length perceive, at least for fugitive moments, that a constant serenity may be preferable to a life of vicissitudes ever changing thus, when all one's comfort perhaps doting upon dust, is to say from time to time with an anonymous poet, whose song of parting is so expressive of anticipating intense misery,—

“ Drink, drink the generous wine, love,
 ’Twill cheer thine heart ;
 Drink, drink while there is time, love—
 Too soon we part.
 Tune not thy harp to sorrow,
 Light be thy lay ;
 Our hearts may break to-morrow,
 But not to-day.
 Twine thy dark hair with flowers
 And jewels bright ;
 We'll laugh away the hours
 Till morning's light.
 We'll linger amidst joys, love,
 Too bright to last ;
 And never think how soon, love,
 They'll all be past *.”

“ On earth,” says a great author, “there is nothing that has received the finishing hand but sorrow.”

"She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must part,
 And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
 Bidding adieu:
 Ay, in the very temple of Delight
 Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine."

Sebastian del Piombo is admired for the wonderful art which he displayed in one of his portraits, representing therein the differences in five or six various kinds of black,—as velvet, satin, silk of Mantua, damask, cloth, and the human hair. Nature may, in like manner, surprise observers by its diversity of sorrows, all distinguishable, though all intense. Into some enter sentiments which give a kind of relief to the sombre hue. One is marked with noble indignation, another with tender pity; one is blended with a sense of suffering injustice, another throws out the beauty of action; another is enlivened with a hope of futurity. Perhaps the only pure, absorbing, unmitigated, unredeemed, passive, perfect blackness, is that caused by the irremediable separation of hearts that love each other. There is the sinking in and obliteration of nature, the biting in of a corrosive sorrow, and then what consolation can you who are of the world point out or even dream of? The only words of the sufferer can be those of Oriana in Shirley's "Traitor:" "Do with me what you please; I am all passive, nothing of myself but an obedience to unhappiness." True, this intense affliction rolls in the mind only at intervening spaces, like waves against the shore, the interval between each swell being more or less protracted. Once a day, once an hour it returns, perhaps still oftener; but when it does come, the heart each time is shaken to its centre; and, were these shocks to be continuous, it would probably give way altogether; for as each wave falls all is lost sight of, and only a dismal blank or chaotic confusion reigns. The poet may well say,

"—— Scarce seen
 And slight withal may be the things which bring
 Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
 Aside for ever: it may be a sound—
 A tone of music, summer's eve, or spring,
 A flower, the wind, the ocean, which shall wound,
 Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound."

"A religious life," says St. Thomas of Villanova, "is a quiet, pacific, secure, delectable, rational, amiable, and gracious life. A secular life is often a troubled, laborious, anxious, dangerous, bitter, and distracted life. I speak to those who have experience, and who can judge of the truth of what I say*." "Is it

not," he asks elsewhere, "a more blessed thing to apply to wisdom than to mammon? to be occupied more with religion than with riches? to be engaged more in learning, and speculating, and discussing celestial and intellectual things, than in the drudgery of secular cares? Oh, how I lament when I see a mind of a fine disposition devoted to such a miserable end*!"

"When man has cast off his ambitious greatness
And sunk into the sweetness of himself;
Built his foundation upon honest thoughts;
Not great, but good, desires his daily servants;
How quietly he sleeps! How joyfully
He wakes again!"

The monk who knows how to make a right use of this sweet retiredness, will say with the poet,—

"O you that bathe in courtlye blysse,
Or toyle in fortune's giddy spheare,
Do not too rashlye deeme anysse
Of him that bydes contented here."

For those who have a tendency to the pensive pleasures, there seems to be very congenial food within a retreat like this. St. Stephen of Grandmont goes so far as to say, "When God converts any one to a monastic life, He leads him into a paradise†." What an instance do we behold in men like Cassiodorus, the chancellor of Theodoric, in Vivarium, sanctifying their majestic old age in the cloister! St. Chrysostom said of the monks and hermits of his time, that, in many respects, their occupation was like that of Adam before his fall, when he conversed familiarly with God, and remained in that paradise of delights. "The mere sight of one of them," he says "impresses on the heart gentleness and modesty. You say that their life is sad, and that all joy is banished from them. But I ask," he continues, "is there any thing in the world more agreeable than to be never troubled by any passion, never to experience a weariness of existence, or melancholy? What are all the diversions of the circus to that advantage?" Cheerfulness, and even gaiety of heart were deemed monastic badges that all members of such a profession should wear. "Salute our messenger," says Fulbert of Chartres to a certain monk, "and let him see what you always wear, *cum simplicitate monastica hilaritatem angelicam‡.*" The Macarius of Alexandria was proposed as a mirror to monks rather than the Macarius of Egypt, for the reason that as Socrates distinguishes them, the former was

* De Div. August. iii.

† S. Stephani Grandim., Liber Sententiarum, c. ii.

‡ Ep. lxxi.

always cheerful and pleasant, being a man who used with facetious urbanity to induce young men to embrace a life of virtue*. History itself bears testimony to the fact that monks and friars were imitators of this model. Mathieu Paris mentions an epigram or merry saying of Roger Bacon respecting a certain Peter surnamed of the Rocks a Poitevin, and one of the king's favourites. A delightful urbanity, and a vein of mirthful observation characterize even the literary correspondence of the laborious Benedictines of St. Maur. It is the same spirit which breathes in the mendicant orders. "The privileges of a friar in this life," St. Francis used to say, "consist in a tranquil conscience, in the assurance of eternal beatitude, in a pacific life without quarrels, and in a deliverance from temporal cares†." St. Francis says that the life of his brethren is that of the birds. "A friar," he says playfully, "should be a nightingale in the choir to sing devoutly, a dove in the oratory to utter soothing sounds continually, a pelican in the chapter to wound himself for others with his beak, a peacock in the dormitory to walk softly, a crane in discourse to speak deliberately, an eagle in reading to fix the eyes of his mind, a turtle on a journey to meditate on what is read, a hawk in preaching to take prey for Christ, and a sparrow in the refectory to eat whatever he finds, however common‡."

"St. Stephen and the hermits of Grandmont seem," says their historian, "by their holy rule and life to have excluded the whole empire of necessity §." Although the ideal in religious communities was never at variance with the practical, the monastic state might be said generally to involve, not alone a happy but also a poetic existence, and the fact has struck the attention of many distinguished observers. "Perhaps," says Hazlitt, "the old monastic institutions were not in this respect unwise, which carried on to the end of life the secluded habits and romantic associations with which it began, and which created a privileged world for the inhabitants, distinct from the common world of men and women,"

' — a world in which

Were strewn rich gifts, unknown to any Muse,
Though Fancy's casket were unlock'd to choose.' "

The very names of the ancient abbeys seem to indicate their poetic character. Take those of the Cistercians. They are, to cite but a few, the abbey of Aurora in Germany, founded in 1138; in Suabia, Lucidas vallis, Lucida stella, Vallis rosarum, Fons beatæ Mariæ, Vetus cella, Vallis angeli, Vallis cœli,

* Hist. Eccles. iv. c. 13.

† Spec. Vit. S. F.

VOL. VII.

‡ Spec. Vitæ S. F.

§ Levesque, i.

Hortus Dei, Pura vallis, Bona cella; in Franconia, Felix aula, Vallis S. Crucis; in Bavaria, Felix vallis; in Westphalia, Porta cœli, Pax Dei, Mons cœli, Fons salutis, Hortus B. Mariæ, Mons amoris; in Zeeland, Vitæ schola; in Jutland, Tuta vallis, Insula Dei, Locus Dei; in Castille, Rivus siccus, Vallis paradisi, Fons calidus; in Catalonia, Vallis B. Mariæ, Vallis sancta; in Valentia, Mons sanctus; in the diocese of Toul, Bellus pratum; in Hesse, S. Maria, De frigido monte; in Ireland, Mellifons; in France, Mons petrosus, Vallis benedicta, Bella aqua; in Provence, Vallis sancta, Scala Dei; in France, Pratum benedictum, Niger lacus; in Champagne and Picardy, Septem fontes, Tres fontes, Fons Joannis, Altus fons, Bonus fons; in Flanders, Rosendale, Vallis rosarum, Beau pré*." In Aquitaine, a monastery of the Order of Grandmont was called the lover's rock, Roquemadour. In fact the origin of monasteries, as we before observed, was often poetical; it was a dream, an heroic action, an irreparable grief, or even the hearing sweet distant music. Near Assenbroech, about a mile from Bruges, there was a spot where certain harmonious sounds were said to be often heard, so that many persons declared they could never express the delightful impression produced by them in their hearts. They declared this to the magistrates of Bruges. It was at all events decided that the spot should be chosen to honour God. Hence some nuns resolved to take up their abode there; and this was the origin of the Dominican convent of the vale of angels†. An Italian poet addressed these lines to Honoratus Fascitellus, a monk of Mount Cassino, who was himself a poet:—

"Fascitelle, quid otio in beato:
 Dictavit tibi rosidis sub antris
 Musa candida? Nil soles profecto
 Unquam scribere laurea corona
 Non dignum: ipse miser tumultuosa
 Urbe detineor, tibi benignus
 Dedit Juppiter in remoto agello
 Latentem placida frui quiete,
 Inter Socraticos libros‡."

The learned Joannes Lancisius, describing the same monastery in a letter to a friend, says, "since we should always prefer eternal and immortal to perishable or mortal things, you will not be surprised if, from this top of Cassino, writing to you, I should keep silence as to difficulties of the journey and every thing else but what I have found here. Our expectations were

* Aubertus Miræus, Chron. Cister.

† De Jonghe, Belgium Dominicanum, 194.

‡ Hist. Abb. Cassinens. xi. 685.

great from the fame of the place ; but all was greater than we could have supposed, whether in regard to the buildings, or the exercises of piety, or the benignity of our reception. Moreover we experience here how far more sweet are the fruits of solitude than the vain pleasures of the world ; therefore I cannot but envy the happiness of these monks of Cassino. Truly on this mountain so near to heaven one seems to breathe a certain divine air *."

The poet Marlow, in his tragedy of Edward II., ascribes the same impressions to that king on taking leave of an abbot, for he represents him saying to his host,—

" Father, this life contemplative is heaven.
Oh, that I might this life in quiet lead !
But we, alas ! are chas'd ——"

In the benediction of an abess the pontiff invokes God, who didst make to come joyfully to the sea shore—" cum tympanis et choris"—Maria, the sister of Moses, passing with the other women amidst the waters†. It is not to weeping and mourning, to gloom and desolation, but it is thus to dancing joy that such privileged souls are supposed to hasten.

One cannot wonder, therefore, that persons who have found this peculiar state of life a realization of all their wishes, as far as they were limited to time, should advise those whom they believed called to it to embrace it with them. Writing to Radulphus, archbishop of Rheims, describing his monastery in Calabria, St. Bruno accordingly says to him ; " Here strenuous men can retire into themselves when they please and dwell with themselves, cultivate the germs of virtues, and happily enjoy the fruits of Paradise. Here is acquired that eye by whose serene look the spouse is wounded, by whose clear pure love our God is seen. Here is laborious leisure and repose in quiet action. Here, for the toil of the contest, God repays to his combatants the desired recompense, namely, peace which the world knows not, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This is that beautiful Rachel more loved by Jacob, though less fruitful in sons than Lia ; for fewer are the sons of contemplation than of action. This is that best part which Mary chose, and which is never to be taken away. How I wish, beloved brother, that thou wouldest feel this love ! O what is more perverse, what is so repugnant to reason and justice, and to nature itself, than to love the creature more than the Creator ? What thinkest thou to do, beloved ? Is it not right to yield to the Divine counsels, to yield to truth which cannot deceive ? For

* Hist. Abb. Cassinens. xiii. 825.

† De Bened. Abbatissæ.

He says, 'Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos.' Is it not pernicious and useless to extend concupiscence with solitudes and anxieties, with fears and griefs, to be incessantly afflicted? But what is a greater burden than that which depresses the mind from the citadel of its dignity into the depth which is all injustice? Fly, then, my brother, fly all these troubles and miseries, and transfer thyself from the tempest of this world into the safe and quiet station of the port. Moreover, let thy love remember that when I, and thou, and Fulcius were one day together in a little garden adjacent to the house of Ada, where thou wert then lodging, we spoke of the false pleasures and riches of this perishable world and of the eternal joys of glory, how fervently with Divine love we promised and vowed to the Holy Ghost to leave shortly the fugitive things of this world and to lay hold on eternal, and put on the monastic habit. What remains of thy promise, dearly beloved? Let nothing longer detain thee from the path of justice. And what is so just, so useful, what so inherent in human nature itself, and so agreeable to it, as to love good? And what is so good as God? I wish thou mayest not despise a friend advising thee. I wish thou mayest deliver me from the solicitude which I feel on thy account, and that we may meet to live thenceforth in union blessed. I pray thee to send me the life of St. Remy, for it is not to be found in these parts. Farewell *."

The monastic poet who sings of his order, expresses his own attachment to that life in the lines which many who experienced it have loved to repeat—

"Antiqui repetamus iter, repetamus amorem
Propositi : cellas humiles, sylvasque quietas,
Atque intermissæ solatia dulcia vitæ †."

The appeal to nature itself by St. Bruno is, no doubt, remarkable; but, the fact is, that we have the testimony even of the ancient philosophers, statesmen, and poets in favour of a kind of life which in many points resembles the monastic state, which cannot be absolutely and universally condemned without contradicting the experience and judgment of mankind in every age through which the world has hitherto passed; so that to the wise man of all former times the monk might say, in reference to the opinion now too often entertained respecting himself by the ignorant,

"————— Domens
Judicio vulgi, sanus fortasse tuo ‡."

* Epist. S. Brunonis.

† Vincent. Carthus., de Origine S. Carthus. Ordinis.

‡ Hor. i. 6.

Socrates, describing the men who would be the best guardians for his republic, says that none of them should personally possess any property, that their houses should be open to all comers, that they should dine together at a common table, that they should have no money, no costly furniture; that they must not even touch gold or silver, as the cause of corruption to men*. For such opinions no doubt he may be ridiculed; but it would be strange to mock or reproach him for admiring, as he unquestionably would have done, such an institution when appointed only as a safeguard for religion and the moral instruction of mankind. At all events, the advantage to be derived by the persons themselves who embrace such a discipline would assuredly have been admitted by all wise and virtuous men of the ancient world. *Λαυθάνα βίωσας* was the Greek expression for the happiest life. "I enjoy this delicious retreat in obscurity," says one who sought to realize it. "I am sick of the city, yea, and to a surprising degree of all earthly things; therefore am I here†." Plato in his old age, when he was weary of writing and reading, retired to live and die near an oracle or hermitage, in which he was buried. How often does Cicero extol that life which "was most quiet in the contemplation and study of things, most like that of the gods, and therefore," as he adds, "most worthy of wise men‡!" "*Ac veteres quidem philosophi*," he says, "*in beatorum insulis, fingunt qualis futura sit vita sapientium, quos cura omni liberatos, nullum necessarium vitæ cultum aut paratum requirentes, nihil aliud esse acturos putant, nisi ut omne tempus in quaerendo ac discendo in naturæ cognitione consumant§.*" Again, in his immortal treatise *De Officiis*, he says: "*Multi autem et sunt, et fuerunt, qui eam, quam dico, tranquillitatem expetentes, a negotiis publicis se removerunt, ad otiumque perfluxerunt. In his et nobilissimi philosophi longeque principes, et quidam homines severi et graves, qui nec populi nec principum mores ferre potuerunt: vixeruntque non nulli in agris, delectati re sua familiari||.*" How deeply he could himself feel the happiness of such a life may be gathered from his familiar correspondence. "Nothing," he says, writing to Atticus, "can be more delightful than this solitude. In the lonely island of Astura no human being disturbs me; and when early in the morning I hide myself in a thick wild forest, I do not leave it until the evening." Tacitus, too, might be added to the list of those who would have felt the charm of such retreat. "For the groves," he says, "and that secret depth of woods so please me, that I count

* De Repub. iii.

† Parthenius Giannettasius, *Æstates Surrentinæ*, lib. i. 7.

‡ De Finibus, v. 4.

§ Id. v. 19.

|| i. 20.

among the chief fruits of poetry that it is composed neither amidst noise nor with a client sitting before the door, nor amidst the tears of accused persons, but while the mind in pure and innocent places enjoys the sacred seats. Though the contests and perils of orators lead to the consulship, I prefer the secure and quiet retreat of Virgil, to whom was wanting neither the favour of Augustus nor the knowledge of the Roman people*." Pliny's testimony is still more remarkable. "*Quam innocens,*" he exclaims, "*quam beata, immo vero et delicata esset vita, si nihil aliunde, quam supra terras, concupisceret; breviterque, nisi quod secum est†!*" Writing from Laurentinum to Minutius Fundanus, the philosophic lover of the Garda lake says: "*Mecum tantum et cum libellis loquor. Rectam sinceramque vitam! dulce otium honestumque!*" So, too, the poet, speaking of the villa Tiburtina of Manlius Vopiscus, says:

"*Ipsa manu tenera tectum scripsisse voluptas.
O longum memoranda dies! quæ mente reporto
Gaudia! quam lapsos per tot miracula visus!
Ingenium quam mite solo! —————
Hic æterna quies, nullis hic jura procellis
Hic premitur fecunda quies, virtusque serena
Fronte gravis, sanusque nitor, luxuque carentes
Deliciæ."*

I am aware, indeed, that in the estimation of the most brilliant writer of the present day in England all this evidence will be without weight, as being that of men whose philosophy was worse than madness; but because these Gentiles erred in many things, it does not follow that they were mistaken in all, or that we must disclaim as a fundamental error all wisdom but what has for object the exact sciences and the development of human industry. At all events, whatever we may choose to think of Gentile philosophers, it seems difficult to understand how we can consider ourselves at liberty to appeal to our own fancies from the deliberate judgment of those illustrious sages who gave to Christendom institutions that spread virtue and happiness far and wide around them, and the tenor of whose whole philosophy required a life devoted to the service of mankind. It is a going back to barbarism, and not a progress towards social perfection, when men, growing insensible to the attractions of retreat and of active sanctity, decry the monastic as necessarily a wretched life, belonging to ignorant and less civilized ages.

Thus happy, then, in the estimation of those who embraced it, of those who witnessed its effects, and even of those philosophers who contemplated a certain ideal which in part resembled it, it seems to be the life of those persons who embrace

* De Oratoribus.

† Plin. Nat. Hist. xxxiii. 2.

what is called the religious state. But institutions which render any men happy with virtue, and in accordance with the judgment of reason, which conduce to the general stock of human felicity by providing for the intellectual, moral, and physical wants of some who would be helpless and inefficient without them, and which, consequently, open a fresh source of consolation, and peace, and utility for mankind, must have at the bottom a foundation of truth; and we have before seen that the monasteries are the result of principles which centre in Catholicism, so that they may be said to rest upon it and to spring from it; therefore Catholicism, in yielding such principles, must be identical with truth.

Again, the choice or conversion of persons who embrace the monastic state presents a striking fact, which may awaken and fix the attention of those who pass, and this will be found to constitute another avenue through which the truth of Catholicism is seen. The poet represents our first parent, after his fall, as desirous of flying to the solitude of forests to hide his misery and his shame—

“ O might I here

In solitude live savage; in some glade
Obscur'd, where highest woods, impenetrable
To star or sun-light, spread their umbrage broad
And brown as evening: cover me, ye pines!
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more * !”

It is with different views, we are assured, that the monastic convertite abandons the common walks of life and seeks the retreat of fountain heads and groves. It is in order to live, not savage, but in some respects more highly and interiorly civilized, that he directs his steps thither.

“ O son of earth, let honesty possess thee !

Be, as thou wast intended, like thy Maker;
See through those gaudy shadows, that, like dreams,
Have dwelt upon thee long; call up thy goodness,
Thy mind and man within thee, that lie shipwrecked;
And then how thin and vain these fond affections,
How lame this worldly love, how lump-like, raw,
And ill-digested, all these vanities
Will show, let reason tell thee !
Crown thy mind
With that above the world's wealth, joyful suffering,
And truly be master of thyself,
Which is the noblest empire ! And there stand
The thing thou wert ordained, and set to govern !”

Thus speak the monastic guides. It is not that they think this victory unattainable to all men remaining in the world, but that for their own part the world has tired them; and they seek a cell to rest in, as birds that wing it over the sea seek ships till they get breath, and then they fly away. They are told, however, that they have to take heed that the ground of their resolve be perfect; that they must look back into the spring of their desires; for religious men, they know, should be tapers, first lighted by a holy beam, not wild meteors, that may shine for a moment like stars, but are not constant.

Nothing can be simpler than the rite appointed for joining the order of St. Benedict. "Reverendissime pater," says the master of the novices to the abbot, who is seated; "adest sub auditorio quidam sæcularis, postulans habitum sacre religionis." The abbot replies, "I, et adduc eum." The postulant being then led in, kneels down; and the abbot says to him, "Quid petis?" He answers, "Misericordiam Dei et vestram confraternitatem." The abbot says, "Dominus det tibi societatem electorum suorum." When the whole community responds, "Amen;" and the stranger becomes one of the family. Here is not much ceremony; but often this new comer is himself reduced so low as to be incapable of practising or of appreciating a more formal act of union. That meek unknown would say, in the words of an old play,

"————— my
Fortunes carry a pardon with them, when
They make me err in acts of ceremonial
Decencies; they have been so heavy and so mighty,
They have bent me so low to th' earth,
I could not cast my face upwards to hope a blessing."

St. Fructuosus used to reject no one who had attained to the age of sixty; only when they asked to be received into his monastery, he used to warn them against indulging in narratives night and day*. "Those coming to our order," say the Dominicans in their constitutions, "whatever sins they may have previously committed, are enjoined nothing for satisfaction but to keep the rule in future†." Equally simple is the form of clothing a novice at Camaldoli. The novice being led before the altar, the priest standing only asks, "Quid postulat charitas vestra?" to which he answers, kneeling, "Misericordiam Dei et habitum vestre sancte religionis eremiticæ regularis humiliter peto‡." Then the hermit, in clothing the new brother, prays thus: "O God, Father of indulgence, who wills that the son

* Yepes, ii. 210.

† iv. 1.

‡ Constitut. Er. Camald. p. ii. c. 13.

should not bear the father's iniquity, and who by a wonderful dispensation deigned frequently to work grace by the ministration of the evil, we beseech thy clemency that it may be no prejudice to this thy servant that he receives from us, so unworthy, the habit of this holy eremitical religion; but that the ministry which is exhibited by us exteriorly may be accomplished by thee interiorly by the gift of thy Holy Spirit, through Christ our Lord *." Caution, however, in all these cases had been previously exercised, lest any should have come from being merely bent by circumstances, and thereby blind in self-commitment. The postulant for the cowl was required to have a certain age. By capitularies of Charlemagne the veil could not be given to nuns till they had completed their twenty-fifth year. "There was a person of my acquaintance," says Madame de Longueville, "who had a great desire to retire from the world. She spoke of her wish to Mother Magdalen of the Carmelites, who expressed neither any approbation nor disapprobation; but only exhorted her to be virtuous, which a person can be in any situation; and, in fact, there were obstacles to her becoming a nun, though she never said any thing about them." The wife of Henry de Bourbon wished to obtain a Carmelite habit and wear it sometimes: "but the ancient mothers," say the archives of the convent of Paris, "would not hear of such a thing; having been instructed by the Spanish mothers, who in no case whatever permitted it to married women †." "Mlle Fors du Vigeau had expressed an earnest desire to embrace our order," says the circular of the Carmelites, "but representations were made to our mothers respecting the reality of her vocation. They were led to doubt it. They were told that secretly she disliked it, and that she was only a victim to be sacrificed to the fortune of her brother; and that the step she was about to take was only an effort of reason and courage, wishing to sustain with honour the last male heir of the name of her family. Our mothers at once rejected her, though she did not remain long afterwards in the world." By the first chapter of the canon, "*de his quæ vi metusve causa*," all entrance to a monastery, taking of the habit and profession without the free and unbiassed consent of the parties, is null and void; yet it has been thought that Catholicism would recommend the breach of other vows, consecrated by the finest emotions of our nature! Oh, if it could be said so with justice, the quest of truth on this road might be given up in hopeless despair; for what a heart-breaking thing would such wisdom make of life! But no; our affections, our sweet and pure affections, fountains of such joy and solace, that nourish all

* Constitut. Er. Camald. p. ii. c. 13.

† Cousin, Madame de Longueville, Append. i.

things, and make the most barren and rigid soil teem with life and beauty. Oh, it is not central principles that would disturb the flow of their sweet waters, and pollute their immaculate and salutary source!

“Life, they repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human, and ordained to pass
Through shades and silent rest to endless joy.”

They recognize the efficacy of both; and in making provision for the one in a particular and exceptional form, they seek not to disparage the good that flows by a universal law of nature from the latter. Hatred, they teach us, is all that would outrage nature, and doubly hateful when it wears the mask of piety. Catholicism is free from such offence. It leaves for our poor world not theological, or philosophical, or masculine, if one may be allowed the expression, but female women—women with all that is pure womanly about them; and within these sanctified retreats intended mercifully and lovingly for those alone who need them, nothing, we may feel sure, inhuman and contrary to nature finds a momentary countenance; so whatever ill-informed, but well-meaning, poets may pretend, no unholy spell is there exercised to turn to stone the young warm heart of man or woman. Catholicism violates no pawns of faith, intrudes not on private loves; it prohibits, abjures, and would teach all to execrate a bond whereby “or hearts or vows are broken.”

But to return to our more immediate subject. To a stranger, then assisting at this ceremony, the reception of a new member seems a simple and common circumstance, without any extraordinary signification. Nevertheless this act is, we are assured, a great event in regard to the world of souls; constituting an intellectual and moral phenomenon that may cause attentive observers to recognize the truth of the religion which is employed in effecting it. In the first place, it often involves a change of manners that reason itself pronounces could only have been wrought by a Divine influence. When Pedro the convertite is brought prisoner to his ancient enemy, Roderigo, who accuses him of being a spy, the former exclaims:—

“I come a spy! durst any noble spirit
Put on this habit, to become a traitor?
I come a spy! No, Roderigo, no.
A hater of thy person, a maligner!
So far from that, I brought no malice with me,
But rather, when I meet thee, tears to soften thee.
When I put on this habit, I put off
All fires, all angers, all those starts of youth
That clapt too rank a bias to my being,

And drew me from the right mark all should aim at;
Instead of stubborn steel, I put on prayers;
For rash and hasty heats, a sweet repentance."

"Blessed Berthold, abbot of Garsten, used," says an old historian, "to receive all kinds of men, however notorious for their crimes, provided they evinced a desire of conversion." But what greater miracle than that men notorious for crimes should feel such a desire? "He predicted one day that a man of this sort would soon come to the convent; and when the brethren asked who he was, the abbot replied that it was one who stood in need of mercy. Next day a certain ferocious soldier, named Leo, who had been the terror of the whole country for his robberies and crimes, came to the monastery, and besought the brethren to receive him, though unworthy, and clothe him in their habit. The abbot consented: he was clothed, shaven, and admitted as one of the family; and then, as the event proved, this terrible lion became changed into a gentle lamb, this ferocious robber into a patient servant of Christ. Thus, by the mercy of God, not only did he escape the temporal danger of the law, to the penalties of which he had exposed himself, but also gained eternal salvation. There was," continues the same historian, "another robber, named Embichus, snatched similarly by Berthold from the jaws of death. This man, grievously wounded in one of his expeditions, was brought to a sounder mind by his sufferings, so that he resolved to consecrate the rest of his life to God. He therefore came to Berthold, and was received into the monastery, though the whole community resisted and protested against admitting such a criminal, saying that they might be obliged in consequence to make restitution for all the injuries he had committed. The mild abbot, however, succeeded in reconciling their minds to this supposed injury; and he was received and clothed, and then he became a model of all humility and obedience. At first he attempted to apply to learning, but his nature was incapable of it; so he was ordered to wait on the sick, which office he discharged with the utmost charity and patience to the last hour of his life. He used to carry wood also from the forest on his shoulders, and to minister to them in every thing, and all the while repeat the Pater. The remnants from table he used to distribute among the poor external boys, and at the same time ask them whether they could sing aught from the Psalter; and then he would beg their prayers, serving them with his own hands as they dined*." It is speaking of such men that Raban Maur says, "Sic, sic, per sapientiam, plumescit accipiter expandens alas suas ad austram†."

* Raderus, Bavaria Sancta, iv. 72.

† Rab. Maur. de vit. B. M. Magd. v.

"In our convent of Auria," says Bucchius, "lies buried Brother Gonsalvus Sancius, who was of a noble family, but a wicked robber and man-killer. Being converted to the Lord, however, he became a minor friar, and of such humility that he used to serve the lepers*." Jocelin of Brakelond, monk of St. Edmondsbury, relating a journey of the Abbot Samson, mentions an instance of the same kind. "When the abbot came to Reading," he says, "and we with him, we were suitably entertained by the monks of that place, among whom we met Henry of Essex, a professed monk, who, having obtained an opportunity of speaking with the abbot, related to him and ourselves, as we all sat together, how he was vanquished in camp fight, and how and for what reason St. Edmund had confounded him in the very hour of battle. His life had been sinful. His quarrel on that occasion was unjust. In short, he fell vanquished. And as he was believed to be dead, upon the petition of the great men of England, his kinsmen, it was allowed that the monks of the same place should give his body the rites of sepulture. Nevertheless, he afterwards was brought to life, and now, with recovered health, he has wiped out the blot upon his previous life under the Regular Habit, and endeavouring to cleanse the long week of his dissolute life by at least one purifying sabbath, has cultivated the studies of the virtues, so that he may bring forth the fruit of eternal felicity." William of Newbury had met the same convertite. "When I was at the abbey of Reading," he says, "I saw there Henry of Essex, who had been condemned to death, but by the mercy of the king was made a monk instead,—*amplissimo autem patrimonio ejus fiscum auxit*†." Again, calamity leads some hither.

" — Nothing is a misery,
Unless our weakness apprehend it so ;
We cannot be more faithful to ourselves
In any thing that's manly, than to make
Ill fortune as contemptible to us
As it makes us to others."

Moreover, as another poet says, "Nothing, of which we are under the influence, can prove malignant to us, but whilst we remain in a false world." Therefore misfortunes sanctified by a religiously-informed mind were also a prolific source of conversion to monastic life. In no age or phase of civilisation is it difficult to find the man or woman who can say with Lysicles, in the "Lost Lady,"—

"My comforts ever were like winter-suns,
That rise late, and set betimes, set with thick clouds
That hide their light at noon."

* Liber Aureus, Conform. vit. Francis. ad vit. J. Christi, 92.

† Rer. Angl. l.

The pitiful history of Isminiane, who was called Sister Adelaide of Jesus, in the Carmelite convent of Paris, seems like a romance. She was from Hungary, the daughter of a pacha, and married early to one of the chief officers of the Turkish army. The Austrians besieged the city where she lived, and during the siege her husband died. The city being stormed, and the garrison put to the sword, the young widow was torn from her house, stripped of her jewels, and dragged half naked over the corpses to be sold or butchered. The Prince de Commercy rescued her from the hands of the soldiers, and gave her to the Prince de Conti, who charged two officers of his household to escort her to Paris to his wife. She was instructed by a father of the Oratory, who was of Turkish birth, and baptized. She afterwards entered the Carmelite convent, and died at the age of twenty-eight, having spent nearly ten in religion. In the mediæval archives we find many tragical instances of conversion by means of calamity. Hither came those who had wandered from their homes, fled their friends, and been long only children of hope and danger. Here, too, were found the victims of some great oppressor. King Clodoveus, in his grant to the monastery of St. Peter of Sens, founded by his daughter Theodechilda, uses these grim words: "*Trado etiam illi Basolum, ducem (Aquitaniæ) quem catenatum teneo, cum hæreditate sua, cum castellis, vicis, terris, etc. et ecclesiis, et reliquis professiones suas.*" This chained duke, struck by the divine rod, laid aside his greatness, submitted his neck to the sweet yoke of Christ, took the monastic habit, and eventually was elected abbot on the death of the first superior who had governed that house*. A certain knight, who had lost two sons in the crusades, took refuge in a monastery, and is thus described by a monk of the house,—

"Ipse post militiæ cursus temporalis
 Illustratus gratia doni spiritualis,
 Esse Christi cupiens miles specialis
 In hac domo monachus factus est claustralis
 Ultra modum placidus, dulcis et benignus
 Ob ætatis senium candidus ut cygnus,
 Blandus et affabilis, ac amari dignus,
 In se sancti spiritus possidebat pignus.
 Nam sanctam ecclesiam sæpe frequentabat,
 Missarum mysteria lætus auscultabat,
 Et quas scire poterat laudes personabat
 Ac celestem gloriam mente ruminabat.
 Ejus conversatio dulcis et jocosa,
 Valde commendabilis et religiosa,

* Ant. de Yepes, Chron. Gen. i. 170.

*Ita cunctis fratribus fuit gratiosa
Quod nec gravis extitit nec fastidiosa *."*

The lover's seat, again, is another spot in the forest of life, from which it is found that paths to the monastery lead some whom bitter calamity overtakes. There are tales and poems on this theme. While reminding you of them, reader, I wish you were to hear sweet music.

"—— Love is a gentle spirit ;
The wind that blows the April flowers not softer ;
She's drawn with doves to show her peacefulness ;
Lions and bloody pards are Mar's servants.
Would you serve Love ? do it with humbleness,
Without noise, with still prayers, and soft murmurs ;
Beneath her feet offer your obedience,
And not your brawls ; she's won with tears, not terrors :
No sacrifice of blood or death she longs for."

The archives of monasteries attest that the poet tells us truth ; at least they show us love's immensity of sorrow even when honour, that part of it which is most sweet, and gives eternal being to fair beauty, has left one of two hearts that had been twined together, nothing to please but Heaven. In relating instances of this kind, those writers who are merely pious panegyrist seem to suppose that simply the instinct of Christian perfection has conducted persons in these cases to the cloister ; but, as a late author says of Mlle d'Epéron entering with the Carmelites, this instinct was sustained by the experience of the vanity of human affections ; and it was suddenly awakened by the death of those to whom they had given their heart, as when the Chevalier de Fiesque was killed at the siege of Mardyck, and this illustrious princess decided on leaving the world, when neither the long resistance of her family, nor even the hope of a crown, could make her change her resolution †.

"Our first young love resembles
That short but brilliant ray,
Which smiles, and weeps, and trembles,
Through April's earliest day.
No, no—all life before us,
Howe'er its lights may play,
Can shed no lustre o'er us
Like that first April day."

True, as a living writer says, it is a beautiful thing to contemplate such a love as this, which confers perhaps as much of the

* Maitland, the Dark Ages.

† Cousin, M^{me} de Longueville, P. i. c. 1.

old original bliss of Paradise as mortality ever recovers, seeming to receive it back in a confused melody, which, as a remembrance of Eden, once at least in life, the Creator sends us on the wings of our spring!

“ Who hath not felt that breath in the air
A perfume and freshness strange and rare,
A warmth in the light, and a bliss every where,
When young hearts yearn together ? ”

Then all the pleasure of those blest shades that poets talk of in their songs spread themselves before thee,—

“ The laurel and the myrtle shall compose
Thy arbours, interwoven with the rose
And honey-dropping woodbine ; on the ground
The flowers ambitiously shall crowd themselves
Into love-knots and coronets, to entangle
Thy feet, that they may kiss them, as they tread
And keep them prisoners in their amorous stalks.”

But it is not the less a terrible thing to reflect how an accident—even the slightest circumstance, may tend to mar all this bliss for ever—destroying all hope, and turning all the bright and glowing temple of the heart into a seared and blackened ruin. Love dwells upon a cliff, and all the ways to our enjoying it are difficult and ragged. Hark to the voice which sings in its artless, popular simplicity,—

“ ’Tis sad, sweet Anne, to part with thee,
More sad than words can tell ;
To give thy form to Memory,
To breathe thy last farewell ;
How long thy every thought and tone
Of mine have been a part :
And now to tread life’s path alone,
Oh, well may break my heart !
As dew is to the drooping flower,
As night stars to the sea,
As sunlight to the summer hour,
Is thy sweet voice to me.”

And besides, as our old bards tell us,

“ — No lover yet
Purchas’d a lasting pleasure without grief ;
For love has gall in it, as well as honey,
And so compounded, that whosoe’r will taste
The sweets of it, must take the bitter too.
They who embrace the false delights alone,
Are but feign’d lovers, or more truly none.”

Circumstances often occur in life to place insurmountable obstacles between lovers, and when nothing but peril and misery to both parties would ensue by remaining within the spell of each other's presence, as when Virolet, in this position, exclaims to Juliana,—

“ Pray, stay a little ! I delight to see you.
May not we yet, though Fortune have divided us,
And set an envious step between our pleasures,
Look thus one at another ? sigh and weep thus ?
And read in one another's eyes the legends
And wonders of our old loves ? Be not fearful :
Though you be now a saint I may adore you !
May I not take this hand, and on it sacrifice
The sorrows of my heart ? ”

There are cases when even this consolation must be renounced and fled from. And then, again, how terrible is it to reflect that even when circumstance does not intervene to mar a union, all this mighty love—mighty though so soft, so tender and so pure, depends for each upon the life of the other ; and as every human life hangs by a thread, so does the love which one being thus experiences for another hang by the same thread also ! At least, if not the love, the happiness which that love hopes to enjoy is thus critically compromised ; for the love itself may survive when its object is borne away by death to the tomb. But, where is love's happiness ? It has gone—it has fled for ever ! Yes, there is indeed something terrible in the thought that the being who fondly loves has thenceforth no existence, and no home but in the object of this love, and that object a mere mortal like the rest ! In all these cases, when the impossibility of success, by reason either of untoward circumstance or of death, is proved, rationalism has two ends for what survives—suicide or the lunatic asylum. Catholicity has the cloister. I do not see why the latter should be so condemned as unsuitable to every nature. Shallow rivers glide away with noise : the deep are silent.

Sickness, another source of mental illumination when sanctified by those central views, which even such fabulous histories as “ Gil Blas ” render familiar to every one, proves also for some a guidance to the monastery. In 1348, when the plague made such ravages in Spain, one evening a certain young scholar, James of Valencia, subsequently a blessed martyr, was conversing with two others of his age, and the topic being the number of sudden deaths caused by it, the discourse was protracted nearly through the whole night. At length, after retiring to rest, about day-break, his father came to his room to tell him that one of those young men with whom he had sat up most of the night, had died.

Overcome with sleep, he was hardly sensible of the shock; but half an hour later they came to tell him that the other also was dead. At that sad intelligence, say the fathers of the Order of Mercy, God enlightened his heart to see the vanity of earthly things: he knelt, and, recommending himself to God, proceeded to our Lady of Puch, where he made a general confession, and demanded the habit*. Augustin de Iterano, of noble birth, and a famous professor of both faculties, and very powerful at the court of King Manfrid, falling sick, and promising that he would enter religion if God would spare his life, on his recovery fulfilled his vow, and entered among the hermits of St. Augustin in Sicily. Wishing to lay the foundation of humility, he concealed his learning, and nobility, and high station, and showed himself as one of the most simple of the brethren. After some time, with leave of his superiors, he passed over to the diocese of Sienna, where he placed himself in a solitary spot, where was a hermitage of St. Barbara, in which he spent a celestial life, all the other brethren being struck with the extraordinary grace of his simplicity. Being afterwards removed by the prior to the convent of Rosia, there discovery was made of his name and former life; for seeing the brethren much cast down at certain difficulties in their affairs, he asked permission to write a defence; and when, after much persuasion, this was granted—for it was hardly suspected that he could even write—he put down a few remarks, and handed them to the advocate of their opponents, James de Pagharesi, who, hearing that the paper was written by a simple rustic brother, refused to believe it. Demanding, however, to speak with the writer, on seeing him he began to suspect who he really was, and at length being fully assured, he rushed into his arms and burst into tears. Then the man of God besought him to keep his secret, but he refused, and proclaimed him to be the illustrious man whom he had thought long dead. The disclosure, however, made no alteration in the hermit, who persevered as before in preferring the lowest and most servile works†. Some instances, also, are related of a mysterious late and sudden, but, as was believed, effectual conversion in sickness to a religious life. Thus we read that a certain great personage passing by Magdeburg, and falling sick there during the night, sent for the prior of the Dominicans, and entreated that he would admit him into the order. The prior said that he must wait till morning, as the consent of the convent was first to be obtained; but as he implored him, saying it would be too late, and that his salvation depended on it, the prior went home, awakened the convent, and obtained the con-

* Hist. de l'Ordre de la Mercy, 300.

† Ex. Vit. Frat. Eremit. S. August. i. c. 7.

sent. Then the sick man was carried thither, received, clothed, given the communion, and anointed, who before dawn expired. That night, it is added, a nun of a convent near the city beheld in a vision a Dominican friar, as if in the suffering Church; and next morning the prior, who was to have preached there, arrived to say that he should be prevented, having to assist at the funeral of this convert brother, who had died during the night*.

Some, again, are induced to embrace this life through humility, and aversion for the intellectual pride which has been known to attend learning. To one that knows not the mystery of these strange conversions they would seem but legendary. When Henry of Louvain, rector of the schools of Paris, entered the humble monastery not far from the town of Noerthor, the brethren, considering the dignity and delicacy of his person, after taking counsel together, advised him to return to his own country, and apply to some less austere and more learned house. But he, judging from experience as to what was best for himself, declared his desire to serve God in all humility, and labour, and obedience. So, being received into the hospice till further deliberations should be made, he prayed that God would inspire the fathers with a resolution to accept him. The Blessed Virgin is said to have appeared to one of them, charging him to warn the community against rejecting him. So, being admitted, despising his former titles, he begged to be appointed swineherd, which office, by dint of long entreaty, he obtained. "Who can describe," exclaims his biographer, "this humility, prompting him to continue in such an employment for many years, his only privilege being that he had permission to assist at the Latin readings in the refectory, but with the condition that he should put on a more decent habit when he entered it, lest the odour of the swine should incommode the community?" Fearing lest forgetfulness of his former dignity should diminish his voluntary acts of expiation, he contrived certain distinct places in the swine caverns, such as he had before among the classes of young men in the schools, so that he might ever feel the contrast between his former and present state, in which he continued to an extreme old age.

Others, again, are seen to fly to monasteries through horror at the wickedness amidst which they had been thrown accidentally in the world. The blessed father Peter Francez de Sainte Marie, ultimately a martyr at Tunis, was a native of Bearn, of noble parents, allied to the Moncadas, but so poor that living on their farm at the foot of the Pyrenees, they employed him to watch their sheep in the fields. Disliking the occupation, at the age of sixteen he ran away in order to try his

fortune. Having come among the dangerous mountains of Xaca in Arragon, he became servant in a hostel, which proved to be a cut-throat gorge; for soon after his arrival he found out that his master used not only to rob passengers, but to poniard them in the night, and bury them in a secret place. At this horrible discovery he seized a favourable moment one night, and fled. On arriving at Saragossa, without money or friends, he offered his services to the fathers of Mercy, who took pity on him, and made him serve in the sacristy; and this was the beginning of his holy life in the order, which eventually was closed by martyrdom, while redeeming the captives in accordance with his vow*.

Gratitude to Divine Providence, again, is the alleged motive of some men on engaging in this state. Father James, of St. Laurent, being led by this impression to embrace a religious life, resolved at first to go on pilgrimage to various places. He went first to Loretto; thence to the cavern of St. Magdalen in Provence; then embarking at Marseilles, he proceeded to Saragossa to our Lady of the Pillar; thence to a cemetery, deemed the most celebrated in the world, in consequence of the precious bones of an innumerable company of martyrs there interred. From there he passed to Compostello to St. James; and thence returning by Barcelona, on hearing that the Order of Mercy had been founded on the day of St. Laurence, which was the day when he had been miraculously preserved from an enemy, which was the event that had led to his conversion, he demanded the habit in that convent, and received it†.

A certain practical contempt for the riches and glory of the world is, we are told, another cause which leads some persons to embrace a monastic life. The examples of conversion by a sense of human vanity seem to surpass all that fable has invented. Persons, happy in beauty, life, and love, and every thing; sovereigns, like Charles V., still beloved and admired by the world,—and it has been lately shown that after his abdication he was as much honoured by the nation as before it,—gave up freely what they might as freely have retained. On arriving at St. Yuste, as their master entered the church of the monastery, when the forty halberdiers who had marched beside his litter from Valladolid flung their pikes on the ground to denote that their occupation was gone, one of the Flemish attendants shrieked and swooned away; and sounds of mourning were heard until late in the evening round the gate. On giving orders that he should be no longer prayed for as emperor, but that the name of his brother Ferdinand should be substituted for his own, he said joyfully to his attendants, “The name of Charles is now enough

* Hist. de l'Ordre, 302.

† Id. 351.

for me, who henceforward am nothing ;” and yet he might have had the world still at his feet. “ We all of us do our best,” said Quixada, “ to anticipate his wants ; and if our blood would do him good, we would do it most joyfully *.” In a lower station, where the sacrifice, however, may have been no less great, it was common for men thus moved to quit all the glories of their state, resign their titles and large wealth, to live poor and neglected ; change high food and surfeits for the diet of a workman, their gilt roofs and galleries for a cell, and clothes whose curiosity had tired invention for a coarse and rugged habit. But why should men blame these prodigious acts of courage consequent upon such impressions, that resemble in some characters a waking up happily ? For what was their antecedent state perhaps ?

“—— Whilst in sleep,
Fools, with shadows smiling,
Wake and find
Hopes like wind,
Idle hopes, beguiling
Thoughts fly away ; Time hath passed them :
Wake now, awake ! see and taste them.”

It was not a Capuchin or a Carthusian, a Thomas à Kempis or a St. Bernard, but it was Lord Byron, who said,

“ ’Tis but a worthless world to win or lose ! ”

Cassiodorus, of a great Calabrian family at Scyllacensis, gave an early example of this awakening when he changed into a monastery his palace, on the promontory opposed to Scylla and Charybdis †. Nauerasius, as St. Gregory of Nysse says, in the twenty-second year of his age, distinguished for his eloquence, which obtained the public admiration, conceived such a contempt for the world that he embraced a life of solitude, and withdrew to a desert with one servant, with whom he spent his time in prayer and pious exercises, and in hunting, in order that he might nourish with the game poor aged persons. Blessed Barbara, daughter of Albert the Pious, duke of Bavaria, preferred being a nun to being queen of France, when she was demanded in marriage. In the convent where she was placed was a vast aviary, in which the song of birds delighted her. Fourteen days before her death she was miraculously, as was thought, admonished of her approaching end. She died very young ; but what is most remarkable is the record that, fourteen days after her death another sister of the same house expired, who on

* Stirling's *Cloister Life of C. V.*

† Ant. de Yepes i. ad ann. 550.

fourteen days again succeeding was followed by another, and still, after the same interval between the death of each, by others, till twenty sisters passed from that house, to be her associates, adds the narrator, in the joys of heaven *. To prefer the veil or cowl to a jewelled diadem is no doubt a choice that may well excite astonishment. Yet there are many examples where each postulant is seen to act so, even when the latter is offered by a lover.

“Et, quæcunque es, ait, non sum tuus; altera captum
Me tenet, et teneat per longum comprecior ævum †.”

As far as relates to the giving up of riches, antiquity would not be offended at such examples, as may be inferred from the familiar lines,

“—— Nil cupientium
Nudus castra peto; et transfuga, divitum
Partes linquere gestio,
Contemptæ dominus splendilior rei,
Quam si quicquid arat non piger Appulus ‡.”

Dreams, too, and mysterious visitings have been sometimes, we are assured, the cause, at least in part, of conversion to this state of life. There is an example in the *Magnum Speculum*. “In the year m^civ.,” as we read there, “a certain clerk of Vendopera, while studying at Lyons, saw one night in a dream a lovely city on a hill, and a river flowed at the foot, where he observed twelve poor men washing their clothes, while one person all resplendent was assisting them; and he knew that these were men doing penance, aided by Christ, in view of Paradise. He awoke, and soon after, returning to his country, related the vision to the bishop of Chalons, with whom he was familiar, who advised him to leave the world, and enter a religious order. Coming to Cîteaux, when the porter opened the gate he recognized him as one of the poor whom he had seen in his dream; he was admitted and received, and not long after made prior §.”

The discourse and admonitions of holy men were also frequently the instruments employed for winning strangers to this life. Father Dominick Serrano, elected eleventh general of the Order of Mercy in 1345, had been a celebrated doctor of laws in Paris, so admired that he could not pass through the streets without hearing cried “There he is,—the incomparable doctor,—the great master!” As science inspires vanity, these acclamations puffed up his heart; and he might, says the historian, have perished thus, if God had not employed a hermit to deliver

* Rad. Bavaria Sancta, ii. 341.

† Met. xiv.

‡ Od. iii.

§ 88.

him. One day, when the university in a body was conducting him, as in triumph, to take possession of a new professor's chair, and while he listened with pleasure to the general applause, a hermit stepped forth from the crowd, and said, "Whither goes the proud doctor? Brother, think of what thou wert, and art, and will be. Beware lest science cause thy ruin, and lest pride blind thee while thou enlightenest others. Remember that contempt of the world and of one's self is more profitable to salvation than the most learned commentary that thou canst publish upon law." After the ceremony he retired pensive to his chamber, and began to reflect seriously on the words of the recluse; the spirit-blow was struck, and the result was his resolution to renounce the world. So, leaving Paris secretly, he proceeded to Montserrat, and thence to Barcelona, where he took the habit of the Order of Mercy, and lived a model of all humility ever afterwards*. The general character of the instructions of religious men which produced such effects may be judged of from the words ascribed to St. Bruno by a poet and monk of his order:

"O docti juvenes, omnes erravimus una,
 Temnite divitias, quas nec deferre valetis
 Vobiscum post fata, precor, si verba magistri
 Penditis; et si me digno servatis honore,
 Linquite Pentapolim, fugitiva sæcula mecum,
 Atque specus cum Loth, montesque subite latentes.
 Aspicitis, quantum præsens hæc vita caduca est;
 Erigite ad cælum mentes; ibi patria nobis,
 Nostra quies illic, æternaque mansio pacis;
 Ast ubi tot quondam terræque marique potentes
 Sunt reges? Ubi quæso duces?
 Nunc ubi bellorum quondam virtute periti?
 Aut oratores ubi sunt, clarique Poetæ?
 Pictores, medicique graves, sophiæque magistri?
 Viventi servire Deo suavissima res est;
 Sunt lachrymæ dulces, suspiria dulcia, dulces
 Prolixæ excubiæ, jejunia dulcia, dulce
 Subdere se imperiis atque inter septa morari.
 Quid facimus chari comites? ad claustra quieta
 Nos citat omnipotens per tot miracula, numen.
 Cedamus patriæ, moniti meliora sequamur †."

There are narratives, too, which leave us to conclude that friendship and affection for some who had already embraced the monastic state entered largely into the motives which led others to choose it for their own. Father Charles, converted to the

* Hist. de l'Ord. 282.

† Vincentinus Carthus. de Origine Carthus. Ordinis.

Order of Mercy in the time of Pope Boniface VIII., had come to Barcelona a young man, as ambassador from Sardinia, and it was affection for these fathers which moved him to demand their habit. A curious instance of his discernment with regard to character is related; for when Don Roger of Catalonia, a favourite of Don James II., king of Arragon, obtained an order from his superiors for the new convert to leave his convent in Sardinia, and come to Catalonia, which intelligence caused him to weep, he said aloud, "God pardon Don Roger, who tears me from my beloved solitude, for no other reason but that he wishes to know from me if our house descends in a right line from the Count Sumer d'Argel, who was guardian of his cousin Sinifred, count of Barcelona, in 940. Write to him that it is so, but let him leave me in peace*."

In fine, that a casual visit to a monastery has been known to induce men to choose the life within it is a fact attested by many historians. Andreas, archdeacon of Verdun, coming for the sake of prayer to Clairvaux, but without any intention of remaining there, was converted by what he saw on entering the chapter; for at the mere spectacle of the order of that holy crowd, and their angelic conversation, he was suddenly changed into another man, renouncing the world so promptly as not even to require an hour for saluting his friends, or disposing of his affairs†. Trithemius relates another instance: "When William," he says, "was abbot of Hirschau, Gebhard, who afterwards succeeded him, was a canon of Strasburg; a man nobly born, learned and eloquent, but daily growing prouder and prouder; and, as riches increased, thinking least of all of conversion, but, like many clerks who are intent on secular affairs, careless of his salvation. Towards the poor, and especially towards monks, he showed himself a scorner and enemy, so that he seized the vineyards of Hirschau, which were in Alsace, and kept them for his own use, knowing that the Abbot William, for his fidelity to the Roman Church, had no aid to expect from King Henry. However, being admonished by good men, he repaired to Hirschau in order to come to an arrangement with the abbot. He came, proud, elate, swelling, showing no love for religion in any thing; but Almighty God, in whose hand are the hearts of men, made this Saul a defender of religion; for, from observing the brethren, and hearing the abbot's conversation, he resolved to renounce the world, and in that cloister, under the monastic habit, become a servant of God." To these instances may be added the story of the martyr, Father Thibault, a gentleman of Narbonne, who, being a gay, accomplished knight, and about to be married to

* Hist. de l'Ord. de la Mercy, 218.

† Mag. Spec. p. 322.

the most beautiful lady of that city, was attacked by his rivals, and obliged to slay one of the assassins in self-defence, which compelled him to fly into Spain, where, on a visit to the devout chapel in the monastery of our Lady of Montserrat, he was converted to a religious life *. A more remarkable example still of the same kind is related by these fathers. "Raymond de Toulouse, son of the Comte de Montfort, and Georges de Lauria, his cousin, son of the Admiral Don Roger de Lauria, were," they tell us, "miraculously called to the Order of Mercy by the following circumstances:—The count, passing through Barcelona, on his way to Montserrat to accomplish a vow, was received with public honour, and conducted by the sheriffs to see the places of most interest, and, amongst others, to the convent of St. Eulalie, as one of the most beautiful in the city. While he examined the building, his third son, the count of Toulouse, aged fourteen, strayed alone into the cloister. His father sent to search for him, but he was terrified on seeing him enter the church quite pale and changed. The boy, in answer to his inquiries, informed him that as he was regarding an image of the Blessed Virgin holding her arms extended, from which descended a mantle, enclosing many cardinals, bishops, princes, monks, and slaves, he heard a voice inviting him to follow their example, and become her son; and he now besought his father's permission to remain in that house, and become a monk. This conversion exposed the order to a cruel persecution; for several grandees calumniated it in consequence, and his cousin, son of the admiral, aged twenty-four, commander of a squadron, resolved to proceed to Barcelona, break open the gates of the convent, and carry out his cousin by force. He put to sea, and disembarked at Barcelona in the first hours of the night, while the monks were singing matins. At the head of a troop of soldiers he invested the convent, and entered it sword in hand. At that moment God changed his heart instantaneously; for on entering the choir he thought he heard a voice, though no one else heard it, which caused him such emotion that he fell back on the pavement. On recovering from his swoon, he charged the lieutenant to lead back the soldiers to the galleys. He remained in the church, threw himself at the superior's feet, told him of his project to carry off his cousin, and his resolution now to follow his example, and demand the habit. He remained some days in the monastery, and finally received the habit of a knight of the order. It is added, that the two cousins ever afterwards corresponded faithfully to the grace of their miraculous conversion †."

Upon the whole, then, omitting farther examples, as our space

* Hist. de l'Ord. de la Mercy, 107.

† Id. 215.

is limited, whatever may be thought of instances like the last, and of all which show men acting through the impression of an inexplicable motive, it seems not illogical to conclude that the religion which produces an institution that draws men to embrace a life of innocence, self-sacrifice, and often, as we shall presently see, of great active virtue, by such pure and unearthly means as have been now enumerated, possesses at least the qualifications necessary to a candidate for the supremacy of truth.

But here another avenue presents itself, formed by the general results affecting the common society of the world which are obtained by means of monasteries; and the first of these consequences that may be noticed is the pacific influence which extends from them; for it is evident that they constitute certain centres of peace, from which that divine virtue is more or less diffused through the society that surrounds them. The woods have often, in some way or other, been associated with the love of peace and security. Strabo tells us that the population inhabiting the confines of the forest of Ardenne, when in danger of warlike invasions, used to retire with all their families into its profoundest depths, and there hide themselves, having previously blocked up all entrances with brambles and the twisted boughs of trees*. In Christian ages the alliance between the sons of the forest and pacific men must be traced in the number of monasteries which attracted the latter, and caused them to dwell in the woods. "What is to be thought of these monasteries," says William of Newbury, "and other such places, which in the days of King Stephen were built, but that they are castles or camps of God, in which the soldiers of Christ keep watch and ward against spiritual wickedness? And as in this age, in the decline of the king's power, the great men of the kingdom built castles and citadels for themselves, and thus, by the malice of the devil, discords were made to superabound; so has there been established this wise and salutary provision of the great king, who, against the king of pride, caused, as was becoming to the king of peace, such fortresses to be erected. In that one reign more than a hundred monasteries of men and women were raised in England†." Peter the Venerable, in his defence of Cluny, takes the same view, saying, "Let us suppose that a castle is given to monks. It immediately ceases to be a castle, and becomes an oratory; nor does any one after that transformation fight there against corporeal enemies in a corporeal army, but all are employed in repelling spiritual enemies by spiritual weapons. So that what was before a fortress of war for the devil, now shelters those who fight for Christ; and what was before a den

* Lib. iv.

† Guil. Neub. Rer. Anglic. lib. i. c. 15.

of thieves, is made a house of prayer." In fact, the desire of obtaining this result is often expressed by benefactors as their motive in befriending monasteries. The Marquis Albert, for instance, in 1156, confirming a donation to the monastery of Heusdorf, begins with these words: "I, Albertus Aquilonalis, by the grace of God marquis, make known to all future generations of the faithful, and of the religious serving God, that I always contended for peace and desired tranquillity; and knowing that formerly by their most serene prayers, this mode of government, this light of administration, existed, and that it was by their intelligent providence that laws and rights were maintained amongst mortals, and that scandals were taken away; therefore I have always sought to secure and confirm all the legitimate possessions of religious houses*." The pacific object explains, too, the minute pains with which, by the monastic legislation, every occasion of quarrel was guarded against. Thus, among the constitutions of Camaldoli we read, "*Sunt graves culpæ si frater cum fratre intus vel extra Eremum lites habuerit*;" and again, in an ancient rule we read, "He who never asks pardon, or does not pardon others from the heart, seems to be without any cause in the monastery—*sine causa in monasterio esse videtur*†." Peter the Venerable, in a letter to Pope Eugene III., says, "that only a wicked man or an enemy could advise monks to take a part in war, that it would be a monstrous prodigy to see them so engaged, and that the world would treat such an enterprise with immense ridicule." In fact, every monastery contained some proof or other that it was men of peace who sought their centre there. The epitaphs even on the sepulchres of different abbots of the imperial monasteries of Weissenburg supply a kind of evidence; for on the tomb of Chuno, who died in 1248, were inscribed the words, "*Spes miserorum, cella nudorum, lux populorum*;" on that of Edelinus, who ruled in 1288, "*Litis sedator Edelinus, pacis amator*;" on that of Eberhardus, who died in 1381, "*Princeps pacificus, omni virtute politus*;" and on that of John, who was at the Council of Constance in 1434, "*Prudens, magnificus Johannes, pacis amicus*‡." We read that, by the advice of his friend St. Germain, St. Domnole, bishop of Mans, built a monastery in one of the suburbs of Mans, in which those whom the tempest of this vast sea of the world had driven about might breathe peace safely in the port of religious tranquillity, and where he himself, after the duties of his ministry, might occasionally take the refreshment of holy contemplation. "The world," says Bucehnius, "is agitated by a sevenfold wind which raises its waves; for the tempest of the vices of pride, ava-

* *Thuringia Sacra*, 330.† *Regula S. Donati*.‡ *Yepes*, ii. 148.

rice, envy, luxury, gluttony, sloth, and anger, are the winds which fight in the great sea." But the more the world was disturbed, the greater only was the contrast presented in these communities. St. Peter of Alcantara said to his friars, "My children, imitate the fish of the sea. When it is agitated, so that the tempest drives its waves with impetuosity, far from rising to escape from it, they descend lower to the depths of the war. So you, when engaged in tumult, and when the noisy waves of the world swell round you, plunge deeper into God by contemplation; and if the demon presses you to go out of yourself, have recourse to the wounds of the holy humanity of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which are always open for our salvation, in which you will be hid securely, and sheltered from all the storms that the demon can excite against you*."

This contrast of the world and the cloister in regard to peace is presented by an old historian in a picturesque manner, where he describes that bloody battle at Evesham, on Tuesday, the 2nd of August, in which, as he relates, so many nobles, with Simon de Montford, in the short interval between prime and tierce, fell. "The same hour," he says, "through divers places of the kingdom, there was such thunder, and during half an hour such a dense obscurity, that the minds of all were filled with terror at so sudden and wonderful a mutation of the air. In some monasteries the religious brethren, singing their office in the choir, were in such darkness that scarcely could one monk distinguish the brother that stood next him, or see the writing in the books before them†." What a different scene was this from that presented on the field of Evesham at the same moment! In general, the monastery formed an asylum that contending armies were agreed to spare. When Owen Glendour took and burnt Cardiff, he excepted from the flames the street wherein the Friar Minors dwelt, which, with their convent, he left standing for the love of the said friars. He seized the castle and destroyed it, carrying off a rich booty; but when the friars petitioned for their books and chalice which they had lodged in the castle, he replied, "Why did you put your goods in the castle? If you had kept them in your convent they would have been safe‡." An historian of the Benedictines remarks that even the Moors in Spain used to spare monasteries through regard for their pacific character. "The Moors," says Antonio de Yepes, "when they ravaged Portugal, did not destroy the monastery of Lorban, of which the monks led a poor and most holy life, and the Moors even loved them for their innocence. The Moorish ruler of Coimbra is said to have first discovered the place while

* Marchese, lib. iii. c. 25. + Chronicon Will. de Rishanger, 47.

‡ Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, 187.

hunting. After losing his company and wandering through the woods and mountains, suddenly coming in sight of the monastery, he hastened thither, where the abbot received him with such hospitality that he contracted an affection for him, and came often there in his hunting parties, which he directed towards that point purposely. He gave them also their liberty and remitted all tributes, while all the other Christians were grievously oppressed *."

Ambrosius Morales says, that under the dominion of the Moors in Spain many monasteries of both men and women were permitted by them to exist according to the strictness of their vows. Cordova, the seat of their empire and the residence of their kings, possessed some religious houses with perfect observance. Similarly at Coimbra there were monasteries; though oppression and martyrdom were the work of the cruel king Abderrumen. In all these Benedictin houses the Catholic faith was kept in all its purity and fervour, and thus was it preserved in the rich Gothic foundations through Galicia, Asturia, Old Castille, Arragon, and Catalonia; though in Valentia and Andalusia, and all along the Mediterranean shore, no vestige of the monasteries was left; for in these parts, the sole convents being Augustinians who lived by alms, the supplies were cut off, and the constant presence of the Moors destroyed them; but the Benedictines elsewhere living in deserts were spared on condition of paying tribute from the lands which they cultivated; for the Moors, fearing no hostile movement from these monks, permitted them to remain. Thus were saved the monasteries of St. Peter de Cardonna in Castille, of St. Peter della Laura, and of our Lady of Valuanera, and that of Pampliega, as also that of Sabagun and that of Dumiens in Galicia †. To observe still more fully the character of peace which in times of violence, and when private men were for taking justice into their own hands, was attached to monasteries, we should remember that most of them enjoyed also the right of sanctuary, regulated from the earliest times, not by the ecclesiastical constitutions, or obtained by the monastic or any clerical influence, but by the imperial constitutions ‡. "Go thou to sanctuary, and good thoughts possess thee." Many heard such words addressed to themselves. Let countries be invaded, private houses ransacked, the very woods dispeopled, yet here could be a calm. Many persecuted victims were enabled to escape thus, and find time for deliverance from their oppressors. Must it not have been a solemn moment, and full of holy influences to

* Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, i. 26.

† Ap. id. Chron. Gen. ii. 474.

‡ Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes, iii. série, tom. iv. 373.

the lovers of peace, when some unhappy person, perhaps some queen, had fled through secret subterraneous passages, as at Westminster, to the asylum of which the exterior was guarded by the troops of their enemy to prevent their entrance, and when the great bell of the abbey announced to the baffled tyrant and to the whole city aware of his cruelties that some new fugitive had been registered among the sanctuary men or women to the glory of the Prince of Peace? When Hubert de Bourg had fled to sanctuary, Henry III. violated the privilege by ordering that no provisions should be allowed to be conveyed to him * ; but in general the asylum thus afforded to the weak amidst times of commotion and disorder was preserved inviolate. The charter of the Emperor Lothaire III. in 1138 to Monte Cassino is to this effect: "In general to remove all scandal from this church, we decree by our imperial authority that every man, whatever be his nation or condition, passing to the land of the blessed Benedict, shall be free and secure from all disquietude and exaction from all other men whomsoever †." The Emperor Henry VI., in letters granted to the same abbey, confirms the ancient privilege. "It belongs," he says, "to the prudence of the imperial elevation to provide with solicitude for the tranquillity of the churches, that what seems to have been granted through veneration for them by ourselves or our predecessors on the throne of the Roman empire, may by no interpretation be subject to variations." Then after confirming the previous grants of exemption to the monastery from all service on imperial expeditions, he ends thus: "Since we believe that it will more conduce to the interest of our empire to be assisted by the merits and prayers of religious men there serving, than if they ministered to us and to the empire temporal things like seculars ‡." The same emperor in another charter says, "We decree also that it be lawful to every one of the faithful of Christ, by the divine inspiration, being contrite, to offer himself and his goods to the monastery freely, and without any contradiction from any one; and that whatever be his nation or condition, on coming to the land of the blessed Benedict he shall be secure and free from all trouble and molestation, be his adversaries who they may §." These imperial decrees indicate that when the attainment of justice by legal protection became secure, and the right of sanctuary, strictly speaking, had ceased, monasteries, by the liberty which all men possessed of embracing the pacific life within or even around them, might be observed to form still a kind of privileged region contrasted with the

* Mat. Paris, ad ann. 1233.

† D. Gattula, Hist. Abb. Cassinens. 252.

‡ i. 279.

§ i. 280.

countries which groaned under the despotism of the state. Some monarchs, it is true, like Louis XIV., are said to have had their own projects unfavourable to the monastic orders in this respect, intending to control them and place limits different from what the Church and the ancient common law proposes*; and in recent times the Trappists could only receive such young men as had "satisfied the law of conscription." But in general the state, in consequence of these institutions, had not the unrestrained or exclusive right of marking men, like trees, indelibly for itself. In France, as soon as a tree is struck with the mallet of the Admiralty, its destination cannot be changed. Every attempt respecting it becomes a legal offence, and the agents of the Admiralty are sure to pursue before the tribunals the least infraction of this law†. The same right seems to have been claimed even in England; for we read of Lord Clarendon's indignation at the Navy Board having marked some trees for cutting in Clarendon Park without his leave. It was not so with men in the forest of life. The state could not go in every where with its brand, and mark out individuals for itself; for the monastic privileges constituted a mode of escape for some who were more strongly influenced by the love of peace; and no king or political body in the state had power to wrest for their own purposes those who had been previously marked out for the service of the pacific King.

But it was not alone within their estates and sacred inclosures that the peace which emanated from monasteries could be traced. As fountains of peace they sent forth an influence which tended to diminish for the wide external world itself the evils which assailed it. To pray for the peace of Christendom was a primary object of the monastic profession. In the order of Grandmont a pater and an ave were daily said after matins *pro pace conservanda*‡. Every thing in these asylums denoted this intention. On the great bell of the monastery of St. George at Nuremberg was inscribed "O Rex gloriæ veni cum pace §." And it was not merely with prayers that the monks produced an impression favourable to peace. The Franciscans and Dominicans did signal service to the English nation in Henry III.'s time by making way for the beginning of peace between the king and his peers||; and, speaking of a similar occasion, it is well to hear the remarks of a great historian. "Monks," says Pierre Mathieu, "are deemed necessary for making peace. La principale action de la vertu est de scavoir et de contempler.

* Le Duc de Noailles, *Hist. de Mdme de Maintenon*, ii. Appendice.

† Boudrillart, de l'Administration forestière.

‡ Levesque, *Annales*, cent. iii. ad ann. 1239.

§ Thuringia Sacra, 693.

|| Collect. Angl.-Min. 34.

Les esprits separez du trouble et de la confusion du monde y sont plus propres que les autres qui se laissent emporter à ces violentes passions, qui comme furieux taureaux saultent tousjours sur la barrière de la raison *.” That even the old poets were willing to give their testimony as to the effects, may be witnessed in the romancero beginning “Castellanos y Leoneses,” where, speaking of the quarrel between the Count Fernan Gonzalez and the king of Leon, it says, “Amongst those of the court there was no one who could obtain a truce. But two blessed monks succeeded.” An instinctive participation in the sentiments of the monastic world which he was about to join may not have been wholly unconnected with these words of Charles V. on his abdication: “Although I have been engaged in many wars, into none of them have I gone willingly.” The effect of wars upon the interests that the monks had most at heart were feelingly deplored by the Benedictines of France in the reign of Louis XIV.; and in this respect the correspondence of Mabillon and of Montfaucon with Italy contains curious details. Thus the former, writing to Sergardi in 1690, says, “Oh, how many useful labours are interrupted by this tempest of war! What a destruction to learning and religion will result! I hear that the French wine has been poured out into the streets of London through rage, and that, vice versa, silk clothes of English fashion have been publicly thrown into the flames in Paris †.” “May God compose these differences; may our most holy Lord procure peace for all Europe, and put an end to this conflagration! for nothing would be more worthy of the pontificate of Alexander VIII. I wish I could write of more agreeable things. I wish you deliverance from this monster of war; sed quæ ferunt tempora, nobis ferenda sunt ‡.” Again, writing to Magliabechi, he says, “I have an eighth volume of the acts of our saints ready for the press, but our booksellers put off the work till the peace comes; but when shall we have it §?” Similarly Dom Michel Germain, writing to Dom Gattula, says, “The wars cause an interruption to all our literary undertakings. We can neither print nor send books. Our poor nuns, even, of Farense are disappointed in their hopes respecting information from Sicily about their patron, for the Spaniards prevent all intercourse with Sicily ||.” Nor was it only political dangers that were deplored, combated, and even averted by the monastic influence. There are innumerable examples of its success in putting an end to domestic discord, which threatened social peace and the harmony of families.

* Pierre Mathieu, Hist. de Hen. IV. lib. i. 7.

† Let. cclvi.

‡ Let. cclviii.

§ Let. cclxxx.

|| Let. cclxxviii.

“What a sweet being is an honest mind !
It speaks peace to itself and all mankind.”

Thus St. Peter of Alcantara appeased and terminated the quarrels which had so long reigned in Placentia between persons of the first quality*. Similarly, in 1454, the two brothers Frederick and William, dukes of Saxony, were reconciled to each other by John, the seventeenth abbot of Porta; for, being invited to a conference, the abbot reminding them facetiously of the verse of the psalm, “Non confundetur, cum loquetur inimicis suis in Porta,” spoke with such success that they were made friends †.

An amusing instance, somewhat similar, is thus related:—St. Erminold was abbot of Prufeningen, at Ratisbon; it was he who closed his gates against the Emperor Henry. The people of the abbey of St. Emmeran used frequently to trouble those of his community. On one occasion the former sent workmen to dig a trench to mark the limits of the two properties, by means of which those of St. Prufeningen would have been much curtailed to the advantage of the others. The holy abbot hearing of this work, went to the spot as if to look on, and about midday, when the labourers were fatigued, he invited them to take refreshment at his table. They complied, and so fascinated were they with his benignity and charity, that on rising from table they declared they would not continue the work, but, on the contrary, put an end to it; and thus, the rustics execrating the avarice of their employers, proceeded to fill up the trench which they had made. The result was the conversion of the monks of St. Emmeran, who never afterwards molested their holy neighbours ‡. To the very last hour of their existence the monasteries sent forth peace-makers. Thus when the rustic inhabitants of Sachsenhausen rose up in tumult against their parish priest, John Lindemann, who began to insinuate Lutheran opinions, Peter, the abbot of Porta, made peace between them, laying down a certain number of most wise articles §. Moreover, by their example all members of the monastic family may be said to give lessons daily on the advantages of peace. Men could read them in that sweet tameness dwelling on their brows. Hence, say the rules of the Dominicans, “Gravis culpa est, si quis inhoneste in audientia secularium cum aliquo contenderit—si frater cum fratre intus vel extra lites habuerit ||.” In common families, in spite of those happy tempers that would make “all serene,” if they could have their way, no one need be told for what a slight cause the peace of a whole house is often trou-

* Marchese, i. 16.

† Bavaria Sancta, i. 726.

‡ Constitutiones Frat. Ord. Præd.

+ Chronic. Portensis.

§ Chronic. Portensis.

bled. There are persons in the world, like the man in the old play, who would quarrel with a boy for cracking nuts because his own eyes were hazel. "I know not one house," says the Princess to Rasselas, "that is not haunted by some fury that destroys their quiet." There are even whole nations, that need not be named, in which the spirit of contradiction in trifles seems to be the prevailing passion. Few contrasts can be greater than that which a monastery presents in this respect. "No, there are throned seats unscalable but by a patient wing, a constant spell;" and here are those who have attained them. Who has not heard some trait of the patience of the monks and holy sisters, and what comfort they did find in being so calm? As Candido says,

"Patience, my lord! why, 'tis the soul of peace :
Of all the virtues, 'tis nearest kin to heaven."

This soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit reared these men aloft, made them and angels kiss, and sweetened by its influence many injuries sustained by others living in the world who only heard of it; for who could be unmoved to forgiveness when he had seen these men bear all injuries, as the ocean suffers the angry bark to plough through her bosom, and yet is presently so smooth that the eye cannot perceive where the wide wound was made? As Julio says, in the tragedy of "The Duke of Milan," "I have read strange stories of the passive fortitude of men in former ages, which I thought impossible and not to be believed; but now I look on you my wonder ceases." Oh, a soul like theirs, constant in patience! it is not danger can make this cheek grow pale, nor injury call blood into it.

From all these observations it is evident that each religious house must contribute more or less to the tranquillity and union of the world. St. Bridget declares that on receiving the rule for her order she had a divine assurance that it would conduce to peace on earth. "In omni regno seu terra aut civitate," she heard, "in quibus monasteria hujus regule cum vicarii mei licentia, constructa fuerint, augetur ibi pax et concordia *." But if monasteries serve the purpose of promoting external tranquillity, what shall be said of the internal peace which reigns within them, and emanates from them, since the mere thought of what is there enjoyed is found to shed a calm happiness on others? "When we think," says St. Augustin, "of our brethren who enjoy rest and peace, we in the midst of our anxieties find refreshment, as if we ourselves were living with them †." And again, writing to Eudoxius, abbot of the monks of the island of Capraria, he says, "When we think of the quiet which you enjoy

* Regula Salvatoris, c. 31, Rev. S. Brigit. 711.

† Epist. cxliv.

in Christ, we also, though amidst various and painful labours, find repose in your charity, for we are one body under one head; so that you are occupied in us, and we have rest in you*."

Antonio de Guevara cites Marcus Aurelius, saying, "What does it profit a man to have studied much, read and heard much, travelled and seen much, if, after all his labours, he cannot retire to some place where he can find rest?" The best remedy for human minds, say the lovers of peace, the surest way to harmonize our moral powers, is to have recourse to the supreme peace—to take refuge in God. Hence men offered themselves and their treasures to places set apart for his more especial service. St. Peter of Alcantara used to say to his monks, "My children, peace and love are the arms of the soul, with which it embraces all virtues. Peace renders the soul capable of possessing God, whose place is in peace, so that all depends on our retaining peace. Charity will never suffer you to believe evil of others: you must turn away your eyes from it, and be as if you saw it not. When any one is clearly guilty, think of his good qualities and believe them of him, and never judge him. Discover good in evil, and be not like the world, which finds evil in the best things†."

A religious house seems to realize the wish of the poet,—

"Pax secunda locis, et desidis otia vite,
Et nunquam turbata quies, somnique peracti.
Nulla foro rabies, aut strictæ jurgia legis,
Morum jura viris; solum, et sine fascibus æquum‡."

To those who view it from the troubled sea of the worldly life, it is like a lighthouse to the mariners,

"——Trepididis ubi dulcia nautis
Lumina noctivagæ tollit Pharus æmula Lunæ §."

Or we may say that it resembles a harbour of refuge to those who have been in danger of perishing; and each may hear on coming to it,—

"Be thankful thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!"

"What a happy asylum," says the Baron de Puelle, "is furnished for some old persons in the monasteries! We have seen," he continues, "Monsieur Sublet, maistre des comptes, father of the secretary of state, becoming a widower in his sixtieth year, leave the bosom of his family and enter the Carthusian order, as Madame de Marillac and Madame Poncet, at the same

* Ep. lxxxi.

‡ Statius, Sylv. iii.

† iv. c. 3.

§ Id.

age, in their widowhood have embraced the order of Carmelites. I have often considered," he continues, "many great monasteries even of the Carthusians established for solitude in the midst of great cities, and I have found there, amidst all this turmoil of the raging world around them, solitude and peace*." Now peace is divine, and therefore a religion which, by means of its institutions, without compromising any principle of wisdom or virtue, conduces to peace, both external and interior, both in the political, social order, and in the spiritual, internal region of human hearts, cannot but be true.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROAD OF RETREAT (*pursued*).



ANOTHER avenue, through which the truth of Catholicity is visible from the road of retreat, is constituted by the character of intellectual and moral greatness which the monastic life has been found to involve. That life in general implied retreat, but not exclusion from mankind,—greater security from vice, but not by retiring from the exercise of virtue; and accordingly that state is found to yield men who, as a living writer says, "are strong to live as well as strong to think;" who have always the resource to live; who exemplify his observation that character is higher than intellect; for whom calamity, drudgery, and want are instructors in eloquence and wisdom; whose thought is fed by experience, as satin is formed out of the mulberry-leaf; who know what labour of all kinds is; whose very vocabulary is gained by their life of action. Your mediæval monk did not want to be always tied to the same question, as if there were no other in the world. As Hazlitt says of himself, he liked a mind more catholic.

"He loved to talk with mariners
That came from a far countrée."

He thought it well to hear what other people had to say on a number of subjects. He was not always respiring the same

atmosphere, "shut up in mysteries, his mind wrapped like his mantle;" but necessarily in fulfilling some of his especial duties he often varied the scene, and got relief and fresh air out of doors. Catholicism under the hood forms men in whom, as an old poet says, "the humours and elements are peaceably met, without emulation of precedence; who are neither too fantastically melancholy, too slowly phlegmatic, too lightly sanguine, nor too rashly choleric, but in all composed and ordered. Their discourse is like their behaviour, uncommon, but not displeasing; they are prodigal of neither; they strive rather to be that which men call judicious, than to be thought so; and they are so truly learned that they affect not to show it. They will think and speak their thought both freely, but as distant from depraving another man's merit as proclaiming their own." It produces men who have a most ingenuous and sweet spirit, a sharp and seasoned wit, a straight judgment, and a strong mind. Fortune can never break them or make them less. It is a competency to them that they can be virtuous. They neither covet nor fear; they have too much reason to do either, and that commends all things to them. What other state of life has produced men more remarkable for intelligence and practical goodness combined? Let it be observed, too, that without the grossest injustice one cannot exclude from this number those who are chiefly known to our age as having been canonized, and held up on sacred dypticks examples of sanctity and of martyrdom; for what strength of character do such acts denote! Sanctity is greatness. "A great man," says the author of *Coningsby*, "is one who affects the mind of his generation, whether he be a monk in his cloister, or a monarch on the field or in his cabinet." Now Trithemius reckons 55,900 canonized saints of the order of St. Benedict alone, while others affirm that there are more than 200,000 saints of the order. "When a boy," says Antonio de Escobar, "I saw the solemnity of exposing, at the monastery of Cardenia, the bodies of its 200 martyrs in one day." Down to the year 1490, there had been created from the Benedictin order, as Trithemius says, 18 popes, 200 cardinals, 1600 archbishops, and 4000 bishops*. Francesco Monsignori painted in the church of the monks of Monte Oliveto, at Verona, figures of all those brethren of the order of St. Benedict who have been exalted to the pontificate, along with figures of emperors, kings, dukes, and other princes who made themselves monks of that order. Vasari remarks the extraordinary grandeur of their countenances, and he says that the artist copied them from living members. Now these pontiffs are men who seldom forgot the discipline which had formed them to greatness. They always remembered the monastic obliga-

* *Ant. de Escob. in Evang. Comment. tom. vii. 10.*

tions, as in the recent instance of Gregory XVI. He was remonstrated with for allowing his sickness to be published, by seeking too soon the rites of the Church. "But, holy father," said his valet, "they will say that you are very ill." "And so I am very ill," replied the pope. "But the whole city will be alarmed." "What of that? I wish to die as a monk, and not as sovereign." In the Roman catalogue, 2500 martyrs from the order of St. Augustin are commemorated. In England that one family gave to the Church 120 martyrs. Of the English Franciscans alone, or bred amongst them, there have been one pope, two or more cardinals, two patriarchs, and many apostolic legates. One English bishop and two or three abbots resigned their mitres, four or five English lords their coronets, to become Franciscans. Two lords chief justices of England entered the order. Ninety English friars belonging to it were remarkable for their holiness. One hundred and fifty were put to death for religion. It gave forty-four archbishops and bishops, 140 doctors, 190 celebrated scholastic professors, five chancellors of Oxford or Cambridge, one lord lieutenant of Ireland, and 114 eminent authors*. But let us reflect for a moment on what great men, in the common acceptance of the word, the monasteries produced. "This year, 1248," says Mathew Paris, "died two brethren of the order of Minors, who had not, as is believed, superiors or even equals among their contemporaries in theology and other sciences, namely, Friar Roger Bacon and Friar Richard of Fishakele, who had both professed many years, and who had both preached gloriously to the people the word of God." Come down to later times and witness that John Feckenam, abbot of Westminster, in the time of Philip and Mary. Yepes speaks of his piety, his charity, his strict observance, his mild affability to high and low, his sweet humanity to all men, his vast learning, his admirable eloquence, his incredible zeal for the Catholic religion, his noble sermons in resisting the change under Elizabeth, his intrepid speech in parliament on the duty of retaining the ancient religion of the fathers and of rejecting novelties, his constancy in prison, in the Marshalsea, in the castle of Wisbeach, in which last gaol he lay twenty-six years, employing his time in assisting his fellow-martyrs at their death, and in composing books to defend religion, though all that remains of his writing is his funeral sermon for Queen Mary, in which, with a prophetic spirit, he took for his text the words, "Laudavi magis mortuos quam viventes †."

But in order to behold one of these great men standing as it

* Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica.

† Ant. de Yepes, Chron. Gen. i. 476.

were before us, let us view a portrait by the hand of a contemporary, who represents in a quaint but graphic style Sampson, abbot of St. Edmundsbury. "This year," he says, "1187, on hearing the news of the cross being captive, and the loss of Jerusalem, the abbot began to use under garments of horsehair, and to abstain from flesh meats; nevertheless he desired that meats should be placed before him while at table, for the increase of the alms-dish. Sweet milk, honey, and such like sweet things he ate with greater appetite than other food. He abhorred liars, drunkards, and talkative folks; for virtue ever is consistent with itself and rejects contraries. He also much condemned persons given to murmur at their meat or drink, and particularly monks who were dissatisfied therewith, himself adhering to the uniform course he had practised when a monk: he had likewise this virtue in himself, that he never changed the mess you set before him. Once when I, then a novice, happened to serve in the refectory, it came into my head to ascertain if this were true, and I thought I would place before him a mess which would have displeased any other but him, being served in a very black and broken dish. But when he had looked at it, he was as one that saw it not; some delay taking place, I felt sorry that I had so done, and so snatching away the dish I changed the mess and the dish for a better, and brought it him; but this substitution he took in ill part, and was angry with me for it. An eloquent man was he, both in French and Latin, but intent more on the substance and method of what was to be said than on the style of words. He could read English manuscript very critically, and was wont to preach to the people in English, as well as in the dialect of Norfolk, where he was born and bred; wherefore he caused a pulpit to be set up in the church for the ease of the hearers, and for the ornament of the church. The abbot also seemed to prefer an active life to one of contemplation, and rather commended good officials than good monks; and very seldom approved of any one on account of his literary acquirements, unless he also possessed sufficient knowledge of secular matters; and whenever he chanced to hear that any prelate had resigned his pastoral care and become an anchorite, he did not praise him for it. He never applauded men of too complying a disposition, saying, 'He who endeavours to please all, ought to please none.' 'My son,' he used to say, 'it is long since I became acquainted with flatterers, and therefore I cannot but hear them. There are many things to be passed over and taken no notice of, if the peace of the convent is to be preserved. I will hear what they have to say, but they shall not deceive me if I can help it, as they did my predecessor, who trusted so unadvisedly to their counsel, that for a long time before his death he had nothing for the or-

dinary arrival of guests. Every week, indeed, did he audit the expenses of the house, not by deputy, but in his own person, which thing his predecessor had never been wont to do. For the first seven years he had not but four courses in his house, afterwards only three, except presents and game from his parks, or fishes from his ponds. And if at any time he retained any one in his house at the request of any great man, or any particular friend, or messengers, or minstrels, or any person of that description, by taking the opportunity of going beyond sea, or travelling afar off, he prudently disencumbered himself of such hangers-on. But the monks with whom the abbot had been most intimate, and liked best before he became abbot, he seldom promoted to offices merely for old acquaintance sake, unless they were fit persons; wherefore certain of us who had been favourable to his election as abbot said, that he cared less for those who had liked him before he became abbot than was proper, and particularly that those were most favoured by him who both openly and in secret scandalized him, nay, had even publicly called him, in the hearing of many, a passionate, unsocial man, a proud fellow, and Norfolk barrator. But on the other hand, as after he had taken upon himself the abbacy he exhibited no indiscreet partiality for his old friends, so he refrained from showing any thing like hatred or dislike to many others; according to their deserts, returning frequently good for evil, and doing good to them that persecuted him. He had this way also, which I have never observed in any other man, to wit, that he affectionately regarded many to whom he seldom or never showed the appearance of strong regard; saying, according to the common proverb, 'Ubi amor ibi oculus.' And another thing I wondered at in him was, that he knowingly suffered loss in his temporal matters from his own servants, and confessed that he winked at them; but this I believe to have been the reason, that he might watch a convenient opportunity, when the thing could be advisedly remedied, or that he might avoid a greater loss by taking no outward notice of it. He loved his relations indifferently, but not less tenderly than others, because he had or assumed not to have any relative within the third degree. But I have heard him state, that he had relations who were noble and gentle, whom he never would in anywise recognize as relations; for, as he said, they would be more a burden than an honour to him, if they should happen to find out their relationship; but he always acknowledged those as kinsmen who had treated him as such when he was a poor monk. He invited to him a certain chaplain who had maintained him in the schools of Paris, and bestowed upon him an ecclesiastical benefice sufficient for his maintenance by way of vicarage. He granted to a certain servant of his predecessor's food and clothing all the

days of his life, he being the very man who put the fetters upon him at his lord's command when he was cast into prison. To the son of Elias, the butler of Hugh the abbot, when he came to do homage for his father's land, he said, in full court, 'I have, for these seven years, deferred taking thy homage for the land which the Abbot Hugh gave thy father, because that gift was to the damage of the manor of Elmeswell; but now I feel myself quite overcome when I call to mind what thy father did for me when I was in chains, for he sent to me a portion of the very wine whereof his lord had been drinking, and bade me be comforted in God.' To Master Walter, the son of Master William de Dissy, suing at his grace for the vicarage of the church of Chevington, he replied, 'Thy father was master of the schools, and at the time when I was a poor clerk, he granted me freely and in charity an entrance to his school, and the means of learning; now I, for the sake of God, do grant to thee what thou dost ask.' He addressed two knights of Risby, William and Norman, at the time when they were adjudged to be in his mercy, publicly in this wise, 'When I was a cloister monk, sent to Durham upon business of our Church, and from thence returning through Risby, being benighted, I sought a night's lodging from Lord Norman, who utterly forbade me; but going to the house of Lord William, and seeking shelter, I was hospitably entertained by him; now, therefore, those twenty shillings, to wit, the mercy, I will without mercy exact from Norman; but contrariwise, to William I give thanks, and the amerciament that is due from him do with pleasure remit.' A certain manor falling to him, he said, 'And I do accept this part of the land to my own use, but not that I intend to keep the same in my own hand, or that I shall give it to my relations; but for the good of my soul and for all your souls in common, I give the same to the new hospital at Babbwell, for the relief of the poor, and the maintenance of hospitality.' As he said, so was it done, and afterwards confirmed by the king's charter. These and all other things worthy to be kept in remembrance, and recorded for ever, did the Abbot Sampson. There was nothing more that he intended to do, unless he could in his own lifetime dedicate our church; after the performance whereof, he asserted he was ready to die*."

For every post of eminence the monasteries have yielded remarkable men; and it is curious to observe them apologizing often for possessing the very qualities which rendered them so necessary to the state, as where Antonio de Guevara, concluding a reply to several questions proposed to him by the Duke of Sesse, says, "I pray you not to take a bad opinion of

me, nor regard me as too worldly for a monk, in consequence of these answers which I send you. For since I have conversed with the world, it is no marvel that I remember somewhat of it; nevertheless, God gave me the grace to leave it wholly to serve his Divine Majesty in this holy cloister*." On the death of Lucius II. we see the cardinals seizing on a poor Cistercian monk of St. Anastasius, near the Salvian Waters—"irruere in hominem rusticatum, et excussa e manibus securi et ascia vel ligone, in palatium trahere, levare in cathedram†." When Leo XII. sought men of high talent and unflinching integrity to fill public offices, it was to the monasteries that he repaired; and his intimate counsellors were chosen chiefly from among the regular clergy. As statesmen we find Benedictines and Franciscans, like Suger and Ximenes, making kings acquainted with popular opinion and the desires of their subjects, telling them that what they want, to use the words of one who seems to sympathize with the spirits of a grander age, is not to fashion new dukes and furbish up old baronies, but to adhere to great principles, which may maintain the realm and secure the happiness of the people, "that if authority should be honoured, and a solemn reverence the habit of our lives, power and property should acknowledge that labour is their twin brother, and that the essence of all tenure is the performance of duty." Even for the defence of a country by military measures, men of the monastic state, compelled by the force of circumstances to show themselves in a new light, have been found useful. When the Cistercian monks undertook to defend Calatrava from the Moors, the knights and nobles of Castille had previously declined the dangerous honour. "Et, licet hæc rex ostenderet magnatibus et baronibus, non fuit," says the historian, "aliquis inventus de potentibus qui vellet defensionis periculum expectare‡." But, in fact, without recurring to an exceptional instance, courage seems an essential attribute of these orders; there might be no end of citing examples in proof. With what coolness does the brave Monk Olier relate the fearful ordeal through which the Huguenots made him pass when they seized the abbey of Cluny, and finding him left there alone, required him to show them the place of the treasure on pain of tortures and death§! During the retreat of the French from Naples in 1799, when their soldiers, "less French than Sarassen," as M. Valery says, pillaged the monastery of Monte Cassino, one of the monks, Henry Gattula, received a sabre cut in the face while courageously defending the same archives which had been arranged by his great ancestor; for the iron gate which secured them had raised a

* Lettres Dorées, liv. iii.

† Annal. Cister. ii. 303.

+ S. Bern. Ep. 237.

§ Lorain, Hist. de Cluny, 231.

suspicion that it protected treasures of a different kind; and when the officers, indignant at the sight of his wound, required the monk to point out the individual who had inflicted it, he practised another virtue of his order, refusing to do so. During the middle ages the valour of these men was often displayed in a remarkable manner, when they acted as ambassadors and messengers. The same Sampson of whom we have been reading, afterwards abbot of St. Edmundsbury, describes what befel himself on an occasion of this kind. "I journeyed to Rome," he says, "at your instance, in the time of the schism between Pope Alexander and Octavian; and I passed through Italy at the time when all clerks bearing letters of our lord the Pope Alexander were taken, and some were incarcerated, and some were hanged, and some with nose and lips cut off were sent back to the pope, to his shame and confusion. I, however, pretended to be a Scotchman; and putting on the garb of a Scotchman, and the appearance of a Scotchman, I often shook my staff in the manner they use that weapon they call a gaveloc at those who mocked me, uttering threatening language, after the manner of the Scotch. To those who met and questioned me as to who I was, I answered nothing but 'Ride ride Rome, turne Cantwereberi.' This did I to conceal myself and my errand, and that I should get to Rome safe under the guise of a Scotchman. Having obtained letters from the pope, even as I wished, on my return I passed by a certain castle, as I was taking my way from the city, and behold the officers thereof came about me, laying hold upon me, and saying, 'This vagabond who makes himself out to be a Scotchman is either a spy, or bears letters from the false Pope Alexander.' And while they examined my ragged clothes, and my leggings, and even the old shoes which I carried over my shoulders, after the fashion of the Scotch, I thrust my hand into the little wallet which I carried, wherein was contained the writing of our lord the pope, close by a little jug I had for drinking; and the Lord God and St. Edmund so permitting, I drew out that writing together with the jug, so that extending my arm aloft, I held the writ underneath the jug. They could see the jug plain enough, but they did not find the writ; and so I got clear out of their hands. Whatever money I had about me they took away; therefore it behoved me to beg from door to door, being at no charge until I arrived in England." It is of the same man that we read afterwards, at the date of 1193: "When the news came to London of the capture of King Richard and his imprisonment in Germany, and the barons had met to take counsel thereupon, the abbot started up before them all, saying that he was quite ready to seek his lord the king, either by private means or in any other way, until he had discovered where

he was, and had obtained certain intelligence of him ; by reason whereof," adds the monk, "he obtained great approbation."

Many curious illustrations of this kind might be gathered from history, to exhibit the monastic character on the side of its magnanimity, strength of will, and courage ; but space is denied us. That character would appear, perhaps, no less remarkable, if our attention were directed to its intellectual capacities, on which one may ask leave to make now a few observations. In the first place, no one, it may be supposed, can require to be told how greatly eminent have been men of this profession in the republic of letters. It is true, the monastic philosophy, as we are told, recognizes for some who profess it the value of what is called wise ignorance, and of a learning that flows more from thought and the memory of things orally communicated than from reading. That the memory was often wonderfully developed in the cloister appears certain. This wise and religious man tells us things that have happened many years ago, almost forgotten, as readily as if they were done this hour. Hugo of Lacerta could repeat by heart whatever he had heard from the lips of St. Stephen of Grandmont ; and moreover, in like manner, the whole sacred Scriptures were familiar to him. He could relate from memory as from a book all the sayings of the holy Father Stephen*. Nor was this wise ignorance a mere theory and deception. Brother Simon of Assisi never learned grammar, but always conversed in the woods ; and yet, says Bucchius, "he used to speak so profoundly of God, and of the love of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, that his words seemed supernatural ; and one night, in the depth of the forest, he remained standing, talking with Brother James de Massa, and it seemed to them as if they had only sat down for a short interval †." Many of these men, too, were learned beyond books. As Hazlitt observes, "the most fluent talkers or most plausible reasoners are not always the justest thinkers." "It is better," he says, "to be able neither to read nor write, than to be able to do nothing else ; like those who may be said to carry their understanding about with them in their pocket, or to leave it at home on their library shelves ; who stuff their heads with authorities built on authorities, with quotations quoted from quotations, while they lock up their senses, their understanding, and their heart ; to whom the mighty world of eye and ear is hid, and knowledge, except at one entrance, quite shut out. Such readers have no skill in any thing, in agriculture, in building, in working in wood or in iron ; they cannot make an instrument of labour, or use it when made ; they cannot handle the plough, or the spade, or the

* Levesque, *Annal. Grand.*

† *Lib. Conform. Vit. B. P. F. ad Vit. Christi*, 76.

chisel, or the hammer ; they have not the use of their hands or of their feet." The monks, like the common people, had the use of their limbs, for they lived by their labour or skill ; they understood their own business, and the characters of those they had to deal with ; for it was necessary that they should. No doubt, then, somewhat of Plato's idea can be traced in the cloistral thinkers, who, in regard to wise simplicity, seem to have imagined that the art of reading may be abused ; that it is well for some men to be compelled to exercise their understanding and memory by deep and assiduous meditation, without the use of letters, making truth thoroughly their own ; that much knowledge may be traced on paper, and but little engraved in the soul ; that the unlettered man, having no delusive aids by means of notes, will not suffer truth to fade from his mind. Moreover, the monks, as practical and reflecting men, were not insensible to the fact, that "knowing nothing nicely, or desiring it, quits many a vexation from the mind with which our quainter knowledge doth abuse us." But if they agreed so far with poets and with Plato, they were far from pushing such thoughts to an extravagance. The monastic philosophers may have thought that learning and science might be an evil, if universally and exclusively pursued ; and, as a modern writer observes, "Society is in fact no less menaced by the expansion of the intelligence than it is by the development of brute nature." For, to use one of his arguments, "Suppose our limbs condemned to repose by reason of the multiplicity of machines to answer every purpose of manual labour, what will you do then with the human race ? All men cannot set themselves to fabricate machines. And what will you do with passions and intelligences ?" Still, a denial of the utility of science and learning, even for monks, has never been a characteristic of the monastic mind, which, being essentially heroic, cannot but be favourable to studies, since, as a great writer says, "There can be no scholar without the heroic mind, the active mind ;" and the preamble of thought, the transition through which it passes from the unconscious to the conscious, to which the monastic life so eminently conduces, being action, the world, in every age of the Church, has witnessed proof that the religious orders produce eminently learned men. To observe only recent instances. What admirable scholars were the great French Benedictines in the reign of Louis XIV. ! Certainly, though deeply religious, their letters breathe the true spirit of erudition. "I wish," says Dom Michel Germain to Magliabechi, "that your virtuosi would turn their attention to the foundations of religion and the doctrine of the church, which form our delight and study ; they would render a great service if they could bring themselves into captivity for this cause from the age of fifteen to sixty. But this advice supposes,

no doubt, a certain pain, little temporal advantage, and the privation of the pleasures of this life ; a difficult thing to persuade many people to *." Within the monasteries of the west, however, age after age, have been those who could say of themselves, in the words of our old poet :

" I have lived a long time, son, a mew'd-up man,
Sequester'd by the special hand of Heaven
From the world's vanities, bid farewell to follies,
And shook hands with all heats of youth and pleasures.
Many a cold moon have I, in meditation
And searching out the hidden wills of Heaven,
Lain shaking under ; many a burning sun
Has seared my body, and boiled up my blood,
Feebled my knees, and stamp'd a meagreness
Upon my figure, all to find out knowledge ;
All for my country's good, too : and many a vision,
Many a mystic vision have I seen, son,
And many a sight from Heaven, which has been terrible,
Wherein the goods and evils of these islands
Were lively shadowed ; many a charge I have had, too,
To travel and discover."

But to return to the Benedictines of St. Maur. Mabillon, after expressing his immense affliction at the death of Dom Germain, continues thus : " From these calamities beginning to breathe again, I apply to arrange the Latin annals of our Benedictines ; an arduous work truly for a man now hastening to death ; but yet, after my long studies in such matters, perhaps not beyond my strength, in labouring at which it will not grieve me to die, nor truly will it shame me. There will be Ruinart or others to give a hand to an old man, or to finish a work begun by the dead †." And again to Dom Gattula he says, " If death should interrupt my work, there will be some of my brethren to continue it after I am gone. Meanwhile, my health is sufficiently good, and I can work easily. If I should obtain a truce for six years, and the enjoyment of my health, the work can be brought to the desired end, though I desire only that which is agreeable to the Divine will ‡." What conscientious industry was that of the monks ! The edition of the *Hexapla* of Origen cost Montfaucon twenty-three years of labour. And then how exact and prodigious their erudition ! Zaccagni at Rome was anxious to lay snares for the French Benedictines, and diminish the reputation of their learning. " One day, when Dom Bernard was in the Vatican, he brought him a Greek manuscript, and with affected politeness begged he would tell its

* Corresp. de Mab. ii. Let. cclxiii.

† Let. cclxxxiii.

‡ Let. ccxcii.

age to the company. The monk, after examining it for a few minutes, replied that it was about 700 years old. 'You are mistaken,' said the sub-librarian, 'it is much older; and the name of the Emperor Basil the Macedonian in the first page proves it.' 'Let us see,' replied the monk, smiling; 'perhaps it is Basil the Porphyrogenete, who, you know, was a century and a half later.' The page being opened, he pointed out in the second line,—Born in the purple. 'Oh!' rejoined Zaccagni, 'it is the Bollandists who led me into the error; let us pass to something else.'"

The fact is, that in every age learning was considered the ornament of the cloistral life. If Brother Giles the Franciscan, having at heart another kind of utility, used to ridicule friars who applied to learning, if De Rance, under impressions of a different kind, but which led to the same view, endeavoured to maintain the incongruity of erudition with the monastic duties, it does not follow that the connexion between monasteries and seats of learning can be disproved. Let us only observe a few instances, taken at random but such as will possess an interest besides that of a bare catalogue of names familiar to every one, and a statement of well-known facts. "I remember last year, when, for the sake of reading, I was staying in your monastery,"—it is Bede who writes thus to Egbert,

"—— Bede revered

That sample of what blissful monasteries
Can yield to feed the soul, that inly yearns
For Scripture's deepest meanings."

Hear, again, the Abbot Rupertus: "Lately, Father Chuno, when you, our delightful guest in the monastery of Sigeberg, gave joy to our habitation by your presence, we two, in our usual manner, apart from others, conversed together concerning the majesty of the holy Scriptures, and in particular on the vision of Daniel *."

To learned study and learned conversation are added, before the invention of printing, the copying, and, in all times, the composition of learned works. In the preface to Ælfric's Homilies are found these words: "I adjure you who shall transcribe this book, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by his glorious advent, who will come to judge the living and the dead, that you compare what you transcribe, and diligently correct it by the copy from which you transcribe it, and that you insert this adjuration also in your copy †." It is curious to find those who profess graphiology affirming from their study of old manuscripts, in

* Rup. Abb. Tuitiensis de Vict. Verbi Dei, lib. i. præf.

† Ap. Merryweather, Bibliom. in the Mid. Age.

which uniformity is preserved throughout, in which the same character of letter, the same slope, the same size, is observable from the beginning to the end of a long volume, that "the monks who wrote them must have had great perseverance, uniformity of temper, and sobriety of mind." The scriptorium of abbeys alone might yield many significant facts, but our time will not admit of delay. Robert, a Norman knight, a learned soldier, and a diligent hearer and lover of the Bible, gave parts of what he had received from the king to the abbey of St. Albans for the transcription of books. John de Bruges, a monk of Coventry, wrote with his own hand thirty-two volumes for the library of the Benedictin priory of St. Mary. Godemann the scribe, afterwards abbot of Thorney, entreats the prayers of his readers, saying how he wishes all who gaze on his book to pray that after the end of the flesh he may inherit health in heaven. This is the fervent prayer of the scribe, the humble Godemann. The monks used printing long before the art was generally known; for to form choral books they had detached letters carved, from which they took impressions*. Subsequently, the first printing presses were erected in the monasteries, as at St. Scholastica and Westminster. In that respect one cannot accuse them of being behind their age.

The passion for books which distinguished Ralph de Gubrum, eventually abbot of St. Albans, arose, it was said, from hearing one Master Wodon of Italy expound the doctrines of the holy Scriptures. Nicholas de Fractura, monk of Monte Cassino, begins his exposition on the rule of St. Benedict in these words: "*Dies antiquos dum apud me ipsum intempesta noctis silentio cogitarem, et annos scholasticos summa cum diligentia memoriter retinerem, deliberavi aliquid ad utilitatem legentium tamquam de fontibus Salvatoris producere,—and though the brethren in Christ,*" he continues, "*have written many expositions, as Isidore, Ouen, Raban, Smaragdus, Ferredus, Paul the deacon, and others, yet I, the last of all and the least of the monks of Cassino, will attempt to follow them†.*" Fond as were the monks of books, it would be a great mistake, however, to confound them with philobiblists, in the modern sense of the term. The learned hooded man, when librarian, would lament that he passed his time on ladders, going up and going down, and would add with Noris, "*Inter tot librorum millia a meis libris exulo; mallem autem esse librorum scriptor quam custos.*" And here, while noting their erudition, let us not forget what excellent moral, religious, and philosophical works have been composed by men of this profession. The celebrated Ugidius

* Dom Legispontius, de Adornanda Bibliotheca, 128.
Hist. Cass ix. 555.

Romanus—for we can only glance in passing at a few—became general of the order of the Augustinian hermits ; he is qualified as *Theologus præstantissimus, et Principibus, maxime Francorum Regi, charissimus*. The English provinces of this order were not the least prolific in great intelligences. Crusenius, speaking of renowned friars of our nation, says, “*Fœcunda ingeniorum mater Anglia* ;” and again, “*Hoc tempore liceret rursus in præclaras laudes nationis Anglicanæ excurrere**.” It is curious to hear enumerated the great writers that one monastery alone produced, and that one far from cities, standing on a wild mountain. Thus in Montserrat lived Dom Sebastien d’Erzinas, who left a book on the manner of educating princes and noblemen. Dom Jacques Beusa was a poet and historian ; Dom Michel Solsono wrote the history of the mountain and also of the principality of Catalonia ; Dom Francis Sanchez was learned in Hebrew, and wrote commentaries on Job and on the Psalms ; Dom Matthieu Lauret was eminent for learning ; Dom Matthieu Olivier compiled and translated many works ; Dom John de Gomiell was a great poet ; Dom Peter of Burgo was author of several ascetic works ; Dom John Guerin was an historian and author of numerous works, so that we are told every one wondered how he had time to write so many, considering that he never exempted himself from the exercises of the abbey ; Dom Francis Crespo was one of the most learned men of Spain, and author of many books ; Dom Gaspar Tapias left no writing, though no man of his time surpassed him in learning. The celebrated Marca, archbishop of Paris, had often conversed with him at Montserrat, and he used to say that in all his travels he had never found more than three men profoundly learned, of whom Dom Tapias was one. Signor Formosilla of Toledo, after visiting Montserrat, said that he had found in Dom Tapias an entire library, and that if he could live with him he should want no book. Dom Joseph Basso, if he had not died young, would have equalled him. Dom Maur Mansalvo and Dom Francis Cases, and many others, were of great learning. Dom Joseph of St. Benedict, a lay brother from Flanders, could hardly read when he was first received, a simple stone-cutter, but he was soon a learned man, and became such a proficient without a master that he could teach theology like a doctor ; and a book which he composed was the admiration of the universities †. A recent author, enumerating certain great and universal luminaries, adds, “All these appeared in the very heart of that long period usually called the night of the middle ages, a term, perhaps, well fitted to express

* Monast. August. p. iii. c. 17. 19.

† D. Montegut, Hist. de Montserrat.

the isolated existence of nations and individuals. That remarkable period may be termed a night; but how starlight, how radiant was that night! how lustrous the stars which shone upon that night!" Religion, though not the exclusive, was no doubt a primary object with all the monastic authors, who from the beginning to the latest times sought to defend it with their pens. Great is the number of holy and learned men of the Carmelite order alone mentioned by Trithemius as having written against the Wickliffites and Lollards. In this list he speaks of Friars Marre, Lavinhan, Maidesconensis, William of Talisford, Lombe, Campsconensis, Stephen the provincial prior, Thomas Walden, and John Bernegam *. That profane learning, however, was not neglected in the monasteries can be shown from almost any book which treats of their history. John of Basingstoke, the monk of St. Albans, who had studied at Athens, and brought a valuable collection of Greek books into England, greatly aided in diffusing a knowledge of that language. Brother Nicholas was also another eminent Greek scholar of that house. The friars were above all distinguished for their zeal to promote learning. The finest names that adorn the literary annals of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the most prolific authors during that long period, were begging friars, and, continues a Protestant author, "we cannot trace their course without admiration and astonishment †." Mathieu Paris almost blames this zeal, and regrets the connexion which arose between them and the universities; for of the year 1249 he says, "At this time the monks of Citeaux, in order not to be despised by the Friar Preachers and Minors, and by learned laics, chiefly by legists and decretalists, constructed fine houses in Paris and in other places where schools were flourishing, in order to open classes and teach theology, decretals, and laws, and not to appear inferior to others. In fact," he continues, "the world, already enticed by pride, despised the cloistered life, and sought to seize the goods of monks. Thus, through the perversity of men, the rigour of the monastic order became relaxed in part ‡." Nevertheless, to the retreat of the monastic schools all lovers of learning will ever recur with gratitude. The condescension and care extended to youth within them presents an analogy with what is observable here in the forest, where trees of a certain species, like the birch, never injure the young plants of other trees, however high they may soar above them, all growing admirably under their shade and shelter. If the elm, the ash, the alder, the white poplar, the larch, and wild pine like to be left to themselves, exposed to all influences,

* Do Laud. Ord. Frat. Car. 11.

† Merryweather, 195.

‡ Ad ann. 1249.

the oak, the beech, the sycamore, the platanus, the birch, and the lime resemble the human plants in loving the shade in their youth—the oak absolutely requiring it.

But to return to the learning of the monks. The quick and happy classic allusions which are observable in their writings, as where Mathieu Paris, speaking of a spy, says, "Thus did this Simon, or rather Sinon *," may have struck some readers. The monastic literature, be it said without offence to our modern reformers, abounds with ingenious imitations of the classical style. Louis de Leon, for instance, begins his treatise on the names of Christ after the manner of the ancient Platonic dialogues. "It was," he says, "in the month of June, about St. John's day, when studies cease at Salamanca; Marcellus, fatigued by the long course of the scholastic year, was retired to a solitary farm which our monastery possesses on the banks of the Tormes. On the festival of SS. Peter and Paul, along with two of his friends who accompanied him, he was walking in the garden before the house, which is spacious and well planted. There, after admiring the prospect of the winding river and breathing the sweetness of the morning air, they sat down under the shade of a trellis planted round a little fountain which springs from a hill behind the house, and runs murmuring through the garden." Servetus de Lairuelz, abbot of St. Mary's Monastery at Mussipont, when instructing the religious of his order, reminds them that Bacchus was educated by the water-nymphs, and that their altar was always placed near his, from which he argues the antiquity and importance of their discipline, which recommends that wine should not be drunk without water †. The monks, notwithstanding their essentially religious and Christian turn of mind, never seem to have conceived the possibility of an epoch succeeding when the study of pagan literature would be deemed significative of pagan minds. As a late writer, speaking of Ximenes and his intended edition of the works of Aristotle, says of that illustrious Franciscan, "They knew that the writings of the heathens contained many errors, but they knew also that, studied by the light of Christianity, their defects, shortcomings, and aberrations would become manifest, while the sound truths they taught, and the many excellent qualities which distinguished them, would be more clearly brought out." They were of the opinion of an eminent modern writer, that "we may still borrow descriptive power from Tacitus, dignified perspicuity from Livy, simplicity from Cæsar, and from Homer some portion of that light and heat which has filled the world with bright images and illustrious thoughts." They would be of opinion "that the cultivator of

* Ad ann. 1253.

† Optica Reg. Spec. 25.

modern literature might still learn from Virgil to be majestic, and from Tibullus to be gentle; that he might not yet look back upon the face of nature as Theocritus saw it, nor might have reached those springs of pathos with which Euripides softened the hearts of his audience." The study of the classics as a discipline of humanity at all events agreed well with the higher exercises of the intellect pursued in those ancient schools, and, to use the expression of Hazlitt, the very citation of words from them stamped their books "with a monumental firmness." One might add, too, that in general classical learning in the monasteries was not attended with that misfortune which perhaps too often accompanies its cultivation in England at present, where, as a penetrating writer says, "scholars have come in process of time to love the instrument better than the end; not the tilbert, but the shell; not what may be read in Greek, but Greek itself; where it is not so much the man who has mastered the wisdom of the ancients that is valued as he who displays his knowledge of the vehicle in which that wisdom is conveyed, where the glory is to show 'I am a scholar.'" But on whatever subject erudition was developed, we are told that piety was to distinguish all monastic lessons. The monks imply that theology itself can be studied without religion. So St. Francis granted a commission to St. Anthony of Padua to be lector in these few words: "Brother Anthony, it pleases me that you read divinity to the brethren, upon condition you neither in yourself nor in others extinguish the spirit of devotion*." Bouette de Blémur of the Benedictin order, who had learned Latin at the age of seven, and who had such an ardour for study that she used to devote to it the time for sleep after matins,—whose works were so much admired by the learned men of the age of Louis XIV., would never suffer her literary labours to interfere with the monastic duties. Dom Tassin relates that when the bell summoned her to the church, she would instantly leave her pen and her thoughts, to find them again with usury on her return.

Men of learning and science in modern times have expressed admiration at the industry and genius indicated by the vast encyclopædial compilations of the monks. Whethamstede, abbot of St. Albans, distinguished himself in this way by his great collections, full of miscellaneous and valuable extracts. Such were his *Granarium*, in five volumes, his *Pabularium*, and his *Propinarium*. Humboldt speaks with praise of the *Margarita Philosophica* of Gregory Reisch, prior of the Chartreuse of Freiburg, towards the end of the fifteenth century. He calls attention also to the twenty books *de Rerum Natura* of

* Weston, on the Rule and Ch. x. 14.

Thomas Cantipratensis, professor at Louvain in 1290 ; to the *Speculum Naturale* of Vincent of Beauvais in 1250 ; to the *Book of Nature* by Conrad of Meygenberg in 1349 ; and to the *Imago Mundi* of Petrus de Alliaco in 1410 ; all which works, he says, conduced to a generalization of views, the *Imago Mundi* having been influential in the discovery of America, as Columbus derived all his knowledge of the ancients from it, so that he carried it with him on his voyages. It was at the Franciscan convent of Santa Maria Rabida, signifying of the frontier, one league from Palos, that Columbus, in 1484, craving charity, was received, with his little boy, by the Prior Juan Perez de Marchena, who, when the wisest kings and councils had rejected as visionary the scheme of the discovery of the New World, alone had the sense to see its probability, and the courage to advocate it. Queen Isabella advised Columbus to take with him Friar Antonio de Marchena, as a learned and skilful man in the knowledge of the stars ; nor should it be forgotten that when the mariners resolved to abandon the enterprise, and even throw Columbus into the sea, it was the Friar Buyl who withstood them, and saved him. Humboldt speaks, too, of the progress which different branches of science made during the middle ages, and adds, " which, as regards science, have been too little esteemed."

It has been the custom of fine writers to depreciate the character of learning and philosophy as cultivated in the monasteries ; but it would be unjust to confound the deficiencies and faults of a particular age or period with the influence of an institution which identifies itself with the forms and opinions of no generation. " Cum excusatione," says Seneca, " veteres audiendi sunt : nulla res consummata est dum incipit. In omni negotio longe semper a perfecto fuere principia*." It is not absolutely necessary to despise the monks, even when we find their knowledge of the sciences at default, since, as Hazlitt justly says, " the idea alone of an over-ruling Providence, or of a future state, is as much a distinctive mark of a superiority of nature as the invention of the mathematics." It is common to ridicule the monks' Latinity ; and it may be very true that many of them spoke and wrote " a little tainted, fly-blown Latin after the school," as the host of Ben Jonson's New Inn says of his son. If all their books be unreservedly criticized, assuredly they will not be found without their faults. The style is sometimes tedious, the recurrence to a supernatural side more frequent and absolute than a true Christian philosophy can require ; and their views of the world are per-

* Sen. Quæst. Nat. vi. 5.

haps occasionally such as will not bear the light resulting from a rigorous and impartial investigation. Though abundantly mystical, we seldom, however, find them indulging, like modern compilers, in absolute nonsense ; so far otherwise, they were, says a popular writer, "sublime teachers in the region of the ideal ; and they seem to have been endowed with a wonderful insight into this veiled department of our nature." Even without taking into account the gravest interests of wisdom, it is much that theirs is not a cold philosophy, at the mere touch of which all charms, to say nothing of virtues, fly ; that it is not a science which will pretend to conquer all mysteries by rule and line, placing them in the catalogue of common things, emptying the glorious air, and boasting that it will clip an angel's wings ! It is much that it does not "cut men off, as by a judicial blindness, from that universe of thought and imagination that shifts its wondrous pageant before us, to turn them aside from the throng and splendour of airy shapes that fancy weaves for our dazzled sight, causing them to strut and vapour over some little blunder which they can detect in some allusions, which a schoolboy or village pedagogue would be ashamed to insist upon." True, one must be on one's guard against such language, lest it should lead us astray into an imaginary world ; but used with prudence, it will only dictate a wise and truly philosophic verdict. Without, however, having recourse to it, and even viewing them out of the sphere of morality, the labours of the monks were, as we have just heard acknowledged, remarkable. A late writer has shown the inutility of producing formal proof that the method of the Baconian philosophy was known in the middle ages, since, practically at least, at all times in natural science no other was deemed sure. A century before Francis Bacon, Leonardo da Vinci says expressly, "*Dobbiamo cominciare dall'esperienza, e per mezzo di questa scoprirne la ragione.*"

There seems no evidence to convict the religious orders of that disposition which belongs to other corporate bodies to resist modern inventions, to take no cognizance of contemporaneous discoveries and improvements, and to affect a profound and lofty ignorance of whatever was not known when they were first endowed. Their aim was to grow wise and to teach others wisdom, to assist inquiry, and, as far as they could, in every peaceable manner to benefit the world. The discoveries of the monks in mechanics, optics, and chemistry can attest that they were not insensible to the advantages of that kind of philosophy. Some orders, it is true, were directed to a different end from that of science. "*Gaudeamus et nos,*" says St. Bruno, writing from his hermitage in Calabria to his sons of the Grande Chartreuse, "*quoniam cum scientiæ literarum expertes sitis, potens Deus digito suo inscribit in cordibus vestris non solum amorem*

sed et notitiam sanctæ legis suæ." But the monastic wisdom in general agrees with the largest ideal of philosophy, and with the most popular conception of what is good and useful to mankind. It agrees with what the wisest of the ancient moralists laid down, for "the honestum," says Cicero, "is fourfold—aut enim in perspicientia veri sollertiaque versatur; aut in hominum societate tuenda, tribuendoque suum cuique, et rerum contractarum fide; aut in animi excelsi atque invicti magnitudine ac robore; aut in omnium, quæ fiunt quæque dicuntur, ordine et modo, in quo inest modestia et temperantia *." It was not the monks, let it be remembered, that made an adulterous divorce between the intellect and holiness. The lovers of goodness with them were not one class, and the students of wisdom another; as if, to use the words of a distinguished author, "either could exist in any purity without the other. Truth," they knew, "is always holy, and holiness always wise." Neither is it to these orders that we can trace ideas produced by the vanity, by the incredible rage which some have evinced to distinguish themselves, and to speak otherwise than the human race. Notwithstanding all their scholastic discussions within doors, the monks when they walked abroad were not dreamers or idle men. They had some general notions. They did love to note and to observe. Though they lived out, free from the active torrent, yet they would mark the currents and passages of things, and they knew the ebbs and flows of state, and of all that belongs to man. True, while the voices of the present world say Come! the voices of the cloister, as of the past, say Wait! "But, after all," continues a great author, "perhaps in lands where the pulse of life beats with feverish and impatient throbs, the lesson which teaches us to wait is most needful." Undoubtedly many monastic writers, on points of secondary importance, have been in error; but they did not cling to errors when they began to doubt them. They wished to distinguish between a pious opinion and a certainty, as when St. Hildephonso, speaking of a certain popular idea, says, "Quod licet pium sit credere, a nobis tamen non debet affirmari, ne videamur dubia pro certis recipere †." In general we may say that they were free from all the faults, and whims, and eccentricities of the learned and educated classes. They were, in style, gait, conversation, and manner of living, popular. The common language of the poor and lower classes was what they liked best. They were not those incomplete, pedantic, useless, ghostly creatures which the world despises with so much reason, who, as Hazlitt says, "think and care nothing about their next-door neighbours, but are deeply read in the tribes and castes of the Hindoos and Calmuc Tartars; who write commentaries on Shak-

* De Officiis, i. 5.

† De Assumpt. B. M.

sphere, in which is displayed the insignificance of human learning, leaving it to the unlearned to feel and understand him. They would never have scoffed at you, or me, or any one, at common sense and human nature; and it is not our turn, therefore, to laugh now, however we may differ from some of their opinions." While the learned academicians of Italy, as if by an involuntary and extorted confession of their real character, were styling themselves the *intronati* or stupid, the *umoristi* or humorists, the *fantastici* or capricious, the *infecondi* or sterile, the *immobili* or immovables, the *infocati* or burning, the *alterati* or irritated, the *gelati la notte* or the freezing, the *oziosi* or the idle, the *adornamentati* or the sleeping, the *invaghiti* or the passionate, the *catenati* or the enchained, the *caliginosi* or the dark, the *offuscati* or the obfuscated, the *insensati* or the insane, the *ostinati* or the obstinate, the *assorditi* or the deaf—the Benedictines, Franciscans, and Jesuits were, without ostentation or any consciousness, the very models of a character opposed to such qualities; they were, in fact, generally men who knew what was human life around them. It is not necessary to address them, all scholars as they are, like women, as if they could not bear the rough, spontaneous conversation of men, but only a mincing and diluted speech. They are raised above such speculative philosophers. They breathe and live on public and illustrious thoughts. "Whatsoever oracles the human heart in all emergencies, in all solemn hours, has uttered as its commentary on the world of actions, these they receive and impart; and whatsoever new verdict Reason, from her inviolable seat, pronounces on the passing men and events of to-day, this they hear and promulgate." The Cardinal d'Aguirre, speaking of a celebrated book of religious philosophy of a new kind that appeared in the reign of Louis XIV., called it "*tortuosus iste liber et inintelligibilis*;" and added, that he would rather read through the whole *Secunda Secundæ* of St. Thomas than that little *duodecimo*. As for metaphysical distinctions carried beyond the exercises of the school, the monks, when emancipated from the influence of a particular age, would not exaggerate their importance. "We are so near the other life," they would say with Nicole, "where we shall know the truth of all things, that it is not worth while to labour at throwing light on all the curious questions of theology and philosophy, and it is wiser to avoid showing any preference for one party more than for another." The *Bellum Scribentium* belongs rather to a different race of men from monks. "What a sight," exclaims one who witnessed their commencements, "it is to see these writers committed together by the ears for ceremonies, syllables, points, colons, commas, hyphens, and the like! fighting as for their fires and their altars, and angry that none are frightened at their noises and

loud brayings under their asses' skins." The monks would rather hear what the common people might have to say on a question of philosophy than such men of letters; for "men of action," they would add with Sainte-Beuve, "firm and resolute minds, even the most ignorant, when they fall on pure ideas, penetrate deeply through them; they strike against singular angles, and never let go their hold of them. Thrown into metaphysics by chance, they ride strangely on, and effect their passage by the shortest cuts, and the boldest, roughest paths. As the number of serious questions is not great for man, and as the number of solutions is still less, it is best to see these eternal subjects of meditation submitted to the test of active experience and rude energy, rather than left to the idle and subtle working of dialecticians and philosophers weaving their Penelope's web;" and as for moral philosophy, they would conclude with a modern writer, "If you take to analyzing your own heart too closely, you will find that it is like taking your watch to pieces to look at it—it spoils its going."

It may be truly said also in general of the religious orders, that their love of the vulgar useful, their strong sympathy with the popular notions of good and evil, and the openness with which they avowed that sympathy, are the secret of their influence. If you look at all the variety of objects embraced by the whole monastic family, you will admit that one end which they proposed to themselves was "the relief of man's estate." It was "*commodis humanis inservire*." It was "*efficaciter operari ad sublevanda vite humanæ incommoda*;" and when we consider the wants of many minds, we might no less add that it was, in one sense at least, the multiplying of human enjoyments and the mitigating of human sufferings.

The noble moral writings of the monks have extorted admiration from many of the moderns, who, on hearing some of their periods, seem ready to exclaim, "*Regalis sane et digna Maccidarum genere sententia*." Nations without monks are also presented with fine sentences. But, as a late writer observes, it makes a great difference to the force of any writing whether there be a man behind it or not. "In the learned journal or influential newspaper I discern," he says, "only some irresponsible shadow, oftener some monied corporation;" but through every clause and part of speech of these books we meet the eyes of the most observant, determined, and virtuous of men, the actions and events of whose past life form the matter of their observation, those deeds having in later contemplative hours become a thought of the mind, being raised and transfigured, the corruptible having put on incorruption; so that "the things which formerly were not felt as being present, have now lost their inert form, and come to soar from the body into the empyrean."

The hermit, in the Lover's Progress, describing his way of life, says,

"My book's the story of my wandering life,
In which I find more hours due to gratitude
Than time hath told me yet.
What men should love best—what study, wherein honour lies,
These are my contemplations."

Bacon observes that there are persons "*scientia tanquam angeli alati, cupiditatibus vero tanquam serpentes qui humi reptant.*" Such are not the monastic authors. Their faults, at least, are not what belonged to the greatest of the modern philosophers, "coldness of heart and meanness of spirit." As courageous as himself in the pursuit of truth, their business, they evidently knew, is to feel confidence in themselves, and to defer never to the popular cry, to rise above the world of appearances, "to hold to their belief that a squib is a squib, though the honourable of the earth affirm it to be the crack of doom;" but their business is not to declaim like Seneca, to celebrate the divine beauty of virtue with the same pen which is ready to produce an apology for the murder of a mother. Their object is to give force to truth by an honourable cause, to teach mankind by example, and to maintain justice in the world. As a great advocate of progress himself says, they would be content perhaps that there should be "worse cotton and better men." But are we, therefore, to despise them? Alas! had their notions been a little more regarded by later philosophers of a different class, these distinguished men who receive the incense of such multitudes would have pursued in life the course which their intellect perceived was the most worthy. The immortal Bacon himself would have left not only a great, but a spotless name. To use the language of the latest and most eloquent of his admirers, "Mankind would then have been able to esteem their illustrious benefactor. We should not then be compelled to regard his character with mingled contempt and admiration, with mingled aversion and gratitude. We should not then have to blush for the disingenuousness of the most devoted worshipper of speculative truth, for the servility of the boldest champion of intellectual freedom. We should not then have seen the same man at one time far in the van, and at another far in the rear of his generation. We should not then be forced to own that he who first treated legislation as a science was among the last Englishmen who used the rack; that he who first summoned philosophers to the great work of interpreting nature was among the last Englishmen who sold justice; and we should conclude our survey of a life placidly, honourably, beneficently passed in industrious observations, grounded conclusions, and profitable discoveries, with feelings very different from those

with which we now turn away from the chequered spectacle of so much glory and so much shame*."

Another consideration relative to the wisdom and learning within monasteries, still protesting against the responsibilities incurred by any particular age, is that of their essentially communicative and universal character. "Always," says a modern author, "the seer is a sayer. Somehow his vision is told. Somehow he publishes it with solemn joy; sometimes with pencil on canvas; sometimes with chisel on stone; sometimes in towers and aisles of granite; sometimes in anthems of indefinite music; but clearest and most permanent in words." If obedience to the councils constitute a kind of esoteric school, the sense of their obligation to cultivate what is for the good of all mankind, and to diffuse its knowledge as far as falls within their range of influence, renders men of the religious state in a certain sense the teachers and guides generally of the world. These are the white-haired monitors of youth, guides of the devout soul, guides of the poor sinner in the daily emergencies of life, reclaimers of the profligate, to draw from that wild man a sweet repentance and goodness in his days to come. These are the directors of all classes, inexhaustible in gentle words of counsel, who, from the depth of their cell, or from the steps of the altar, or through the grate of the confessional, sound the secret mysteries of human misery, saving their fellow-creatures from spiritual danger, and attracting them by their embalmed traces on the road of happiness. Over all they see, over all they utter, are spread the sunbeams of a cheerful spirit—the light of inexhaustible human love. Every sound of human joy and of human sorrow finds a deep resounding echo in their bosom. In every man they love his humanity only, not his distinctions. With what is their own they are liberal; and though they cannot promise what is not theirs to give, they would find a way to lead all to heaven, as through affection and sympathy they seem to suppose the whole world which they embrace as going there. Even as scholars and philosophers they possess nothing for themselves. Their notebooks, their manuscripts, their observations, are for any one that desires to make use of them; and in this sense, too, as well as to express the humility of their genius, "*Vix ea nostra voco*" might have been their motto. When Dom Lucenti was about to publish an abridgment of the *Italia Sacra* of Ughelli, Dom Gattula, hearing of his intention, sent him his own manuscript of a history of the bishops and abbots of Monte Cassino, at which he had been labouring many years, renouncing thus the honour which it would have conferred upon him, and content with having obtained the end of its publicity. Now what a contrast is all

* Macaulay's Lord Bacon.

this to the philosophic character that is often found in the world! "Men have been pointed out to me," says an observing woman, "who were said to be great thinkers. I have watched them, and found them to be great thinkers—men who evidently thought a great deal; but then it was always entirely about themselves;" never wise but for a private purpose, nor courteous but where the end is their own. Many scholars, poets, and philosophers now can think of nothing but themselves and their own precious discoveries. "Why," asks Hazlitt, "should they think it the only virtue extant to see the merit of their writings? They must, one should think, be tired of themselves sometimes; but no! they are for ever mouthing out their own compositions, and comparing themselves with others. Instead of opening their senses, understanding, and heart to the resplendent fabric of the universe, they hold a crooked mirror before their faces, in which they may admire their own persons and pretensions, and just glance their eyes aside to see whether others are not admiring them too. Open one of their books in what page you will, and there is a frontispiece of themselves staring you in the face. In short, as a lover brings in his mistress at every turn, so these persons contrive to divert your attention to the same darling object; they are, in fact, in love with themselves."

This kind of predilection does not seem to exist in religious communities. Nothing can be less selfish than the spirit which they seem to generate. It would appear as if even these persons devoted to solitude had retired from the world only for the sake of the world, and not to indulge their own personal disposition. "Why," asks Antonio de Escobar, "was blessed John the Baptist unwilling to converse with the multitude, and so much the friend of peregrination and solitude? It was in order that he might be permitted to admonish men with more freedom; that life, as St. Chrysostom observes, being the parent and architect of noble courage. Such was the life of Elias on the top of Carmel, who, on descending from it, reproved King Achab without offending him. So Herod feared John, and willingly heard him; he feared, and yet with curiosity heard a man who came from the desert, regarding him as rather an angel than a man. The people," continues Antonio de Escobar, "feel the same impressions; they willingly hear the hermit because he comes from the desert, and can be reduced to silence by no motives of fear or of human respect*."

In the Revelations of St. Bridget the duty of imparting instruction by example and word of mouth is expressly enforced on solitaries; for it appeared, we are told, as if St. Mary addressed her in these terms: "Say to that old hermit, my friend, who against his will, and neglecting the peace of his mind,

* In Evang. Comment. vol. vi. 79.

through faith and the love of mankind, sometimes leaves the cell of his solitude and the quiet of his contemplation, and descends through charity from the desert to give spiritual counsel to his neighbour, by whose example and advice many souls are converted to God, and who, fearing the deceit of the devil, has asked you to pray for him, that it is altogether more pleasing to God that he should thus sometimes descend from the desert and proceed to exercise works of charity to men, diffusing amongst them the graces which he has from God, that they may be converted and be participators of his glory, than that he should abandon himself in the cell of his solitude to his sole mental consolations*." Of the monastic courage in this respect, which more immediately concerns their particular mission than when evinced in the extraordinary emergencies before noticed, we are not left in want of instances. What noble valour was shown by the Augustin Friar Isambart in the affair of the Maid of Orleans, when at his own peril he espoused her cause with an enthusiasm that nothing could daunt, never leaving her, but following her to the pile! You can witness the same spirit animating whole communities and orders simultaneously. In England not so much as one man of all the Friar Observants fell or apostatized during all the trials of the religious revolution †. Whether it be in defence of religion, or of the government, or of the people, theirs is the same frank, fearless manner, as if no tempest of erring man's raising could for one moment cloud the splendour of their soul. They verify the noble words of our old dramatist,

" Misfortune may benight the wicked, but they who
Know no guilt can sink beneath no fear."

Let us, however, hear speak one of these unflinching men. The Friar Antonio de Guevara, in his harangue to the seditious council of gentlemen of the Union of Spain, at Vilabrassima, addresses them in these words: "Magnificent seigneurs and ill-advised knights, I swear and protest that whatever I shall say in this assembly, I intend not to outrage, still less to deceive or seduce any one; for the habit of religion which I wear, and the noble race from which I am sprung, permit me not to harbour malice within, or to be double externally in my words. There are amongst you those who know pretty well my nature and manner of life, and you are all aware that I am frank in speech, bold in preaching, cold to flattery, and courageous to reprove." In 1193, while there was war in England, King Richard being captive, Sampson, abbot of St. Edmundsbury, solemnly excommunicated all movers of the war and disturbers of the public peace, not fearing the Earl John, the king's brother, nor any other, so that he was styled

* Lib. iv. c. 128.

† Collect. Anglo-Minor. 245.

the Magnanimous Abbot. By their bold actions in the cause of virtue, the monks and friars set an example of independence and the love of justice. Henry III. having wrested from the merchants a cart-load of grey woollen cloth, and given it to the friars, they in an humble manner sent back the designed alms, "procured," as they suspected, "by the oppression of the subject, leaving to posterity a notable instance of their fearless integrity *." Mathieu Paris says, that "the friars, learning that our said lord the king had extorted these stuffs, as other things which he was accustomed to plunder, without paying for them, felt horror on receiving such a present, and sent away the waggon with all its load, saying that it was not lawful to give alms with the pillage of the people, and that they would not accept such an abominable gift †." Similarly when the emperor offered 3000 marks of silver for making censers, intending them as gifts to the Cistercian order on receiving Richard's ransom, the abbots, detesting the present as coming from a shameful gain, refused it ‡. Independence of character, resembling that of the Baptist, and resulting partly from their position in the world and from the spirit of their order, renders the monks, therefore, not the worst qualified of all men to become the moral teachers of mankind. It seems certain that during many ages the world was willing to receive instruction from the monastic guides, and that in all times the people, when not misled by sophists, recognize them as their best teachers. It would have been strange had it been otherwise; for, be it remembered, that "the literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life," are the topics of many orders. While the hermit is dwelling amidst the rocks and woods, the monk does not disdain to fix his residence in the city with its thousands of interior worlds. He, too, walks through streets tumultuous, in which "the river of life bears along so many gallant hearts, so many wrecks of humanity; he knows of the many homes and households, each a little world in itself, revolving round its fire-side as a central sun; he sympathizes with all forms of human joy and suffering, and acts, thinks, rejoices, and sorrows with his fellow-men." He knows the jest, the waggish story current in the street, the favourite phrases of the day with the sons and daughters of the low, the mystic sounds that speak only to their initiated ear, and to his who has sought their intimacy; he knows all that is sung or said by the lads that would talk their comrades out with their tradition of wit they pick each month from plays. Mabillon knew what ballads used to be sung in the streets of Paris, and, writing to Sergardi, he says, "Fortasse

* Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, 49.

† Ad ann. 1252.

‡ Ad ann. 1196.

non displicebit lectio versuum Gallicorum, qui festive exprimunt philosophicæ peccati doctrinæ malas consecutiones *." "These ballads," says M. Valery, "used to be sung in the streets by laquais, and one is a little surprised to find in the grave Latin of Mabiillon the announcement and the present of these merry songs;" nevertheless, his correspondent writes in reply, saying, "Non sine voluptate legi perlegique Gallicos versus plenos vernaculi leporis et eleganti sale conspersos, statimque illos transcribere curavi †." This facility of intercourse between high and low, this sympathy with the heart of those who elbow us in the street (the stranger's passion from his boyhood, if he may be allowed to make mention of himself), when it appears in seculars, is now qualified by thoughtful observers as a great stride from the false to the true. "Is it not a sign," we are asked, "of vigour, when the extremities are made active—when currents of warm life run into the hands and feet? I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic; what is doing in Italy or Arabia, what is Greek art or Provencial minstrelsy; I embrace the common; I explore and sit at the feet of the familiar and the low." This is nothing but what the monks said ages ago. The monastic language is not that of a philosopher, who thinks that he has made new discoveries in moral and political science. It is "the plain talk of a plain man, who has sprung from the body of the people, who sympathizes strongly with their wants and their feelings, and who boldly utters their opinions." In the middle ages certainly men looked to the monks for instruction on nearly all subjects. Ansfrid, a celebrated master in the seventh century, asked one day the young Aicadre what he wished above all to learn from him, to whom the lad answered, "De his quæ Dei sunt, domine et magister, primum mihi dicito, demum de rebus ruralibus mihi met insinuare memento." This is an instance merely of the religious spirit which secured a favourable hearing for the monastic professor; but so little were men's motives in applying to him confined to spiritual considerations, that we repeatedly find them holding such language to the monk as Cicero's, when he said, "Non quisquam μουσικήν ἄκροατος libentius sua recentia poemata legit, quam ego te audio quæcumque de re publica, privata, rustica, urbana." It is easy to point out deficiencies and even errors, but after all the monastic instruction possessed great advantages, to some of which perhaps one may look back with regret.

In these days of division and ill-disguised hostility between sects and opinions, there are many persons whom we must compliment on the religious nonsense of their letters and conversation, while boasting that they "can view the next world better

* Correspond. Lett. ccvii.

† Lett. ccviii.

in proportion as they see every thing discoloured in this." They think and speak about things according to a certain order of Biblical expressions which they habitually hear, though, indeed, without furnishing by their own history or habits a practical commentary on the text. As a friend tells them, "they fall on some topics into pious exaggerations," and become, "without suspecting it, very devoutly one-sided." In applying the Scriptural expressions descriptive of life and duty, "they do not distinguish between different conditions of society, different sets of circumstances, different properties of the same thing; and even magnify beyond all proportion some of them, while they lose sight of others." One who admires them not might add, that without being influenced by any enlarged views of man's obligations, they are engaged to the hate of all but what pleaseth the stubborn, froward pilgrims to the platform, where meetings open with prayer, in order apparently with better grace to close with defamation. "With unladen breasts, save of blown self-applause, while proudly mounting to their spirit's perch, their tiptop nothings," the animus of their system is crimination of others, and glorification of themselves; warped from nature, as if perfection consisted in being in an ill humour all one's life, their face never keeps holiday; they look, to use the expression of our old dramatists, "like a red herring at table on Easter-day." Eating and drinking constitute their only pleasure, and against all who seek any other recreation they have nothing but menaces and forebodings. Like *Zeal-of-the-Land Busy*, in Ben Jonson's comedy, they find a spice of paganism in every thing else, saying with him, perhaps, "Your Bartholomew fair is no better than one of the high places. This, I take it, is the state of the question; a high place. As for fine sights, so you hate them, child, you may look on them; but I am moved in spirit to be here to protest against them in regard of the afflicted saints, that are troubled, very much troubled, exceedingly troubled with the opening of the merchandise of Babylon again, and the peeping of popery upon the stalls, here, in the high places." These dismal trouble-alls, whatever be their cloak, in one respect, like *Cassius*, love no plays, no smiles, no music; will suffer no gardens, no dancing, not even an evening walk on Sundays; so that if a man had a resolution as noble as virtue itself, they would take the course to unedge it all. The wholesome recreations of the poor and rich must disappear as soon as these gloomy people get a footing. All the places that yielded pleasure to our Johnsons and our Goldsmiths are interdicted by these new moralists. Wherever they go, every smiling object disappears as suddenly as the cabs did in London on the morning of the strike. If there were a game called "growl in the ring," young people might play at it till they were tired on every

green hill ; but as for any thing that savours of good humour, or of love and friendship, it is a scandal to them. "Amusements are not fit," say they, "for a being who is preparing himself for eternity." Wretchedness and melancholy are the offerings which these precious rectifiers of nature the wrong way make to a Deity who has covered the earth with gay colours, scented it with rich perfumes, scattered over his creation a thousand superfluous joys, and formed us with tastes and feelings so unlike the standard that they are proposing for the adoption of their fellow-creatures. What a pretty race, one is tempted to ask oneself, we should have turned out, if they had created us after their own notions of propriety and virtue ; and what a frowning or unappreciated world it would have been with such inhabitants ! As a well-known author says, "Earth, sea, and sky would have been one universal pall ! No vine would cling, no breeze dally, no zephyr woo. Flowers and children, women and squirrels, would never have existed. The sun would have been quenched out for being too mercurial, and the moon covered for making the night lovely." After all, such saints, without the world to compensate for their excesses, would, no doubt, as a learned writer says, make a very bad world of it ; "since as a ship wants ballast composed of mere earth and rubbish, so the common and rather low interests and pleasures, and the homely principles, rules, and ways of feeling, keep us all from foundering by the intensity of spiritual gusts." When these immoderate seekers of what they fancy to be perfection, that would put to sea without ballast, propose their views, they must look for sanction from other listeners besides the old inhabitants of the cloister, let their views of life be ever so well supported by texts. The monks, apart from what their own particular and exceptional case required, seem to have believed that the beneficent Omnipotence, before which they would have us all bow down, has ordered it otherwise. The monks, rationally and with a view to an especial object severe for themselves, do not appear to have been the promulgators of any distorted, sickly views for the people. They seem rather to be of the opinion of J. copo the painter, who used to say, as Vasari tells us, that labouring and toiling for ever, without giving one's self a taste of pleasure in this world, was not fit for a Christian man. At all events, because they were serious, they did not think that there should be no more cakes and ale ; or, rather, with the friar in *Romeo and Juliet*, they said,

" — Nought so vile, that on the earth doth live,
But to the earth some special good doth give ;
Nor aught so good, but, strain'd from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse :
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
And mirth sometime's by action dignified."

Wise, well read in man and his large nature, they had studied affections and passions; they knew their springs, their ends, their use, their perversion, which way they ought to work, and how under a disguised form they could be made worst. They seem to have drawn conclusions favourable to an enlarged and benevolent philosophy from remarking that the immortality of the Gospel is not simply the immortality of the soul; but, as a modern author* observes, that it is the immortality of humanity, and that it is man who is to live hereafter, and whose whole nature is to be perpetuated for ever. It does not seem, therefore, to have been their influence which "eclipsed the gaiety of nations, and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure." There is the testimony of Cassiodorus that pantomimic plays were performed as early as the sixth century, and it appears that from this time they flourished unopposed in Italy. In the thirteenth century St. Thomas Aquinas speaks of the comedy of his times as having already subsisted many centuries; and to the question whether the art of the theatre could be practised without sin, he replied that it was to be regarded as a pleasure necessary for the recreation of the life of man, due regard being had to place, time, and person. William of Paris, in his treatise on the sacraments, says the same thing. Every one knows how the monks sought to diffuse the pleasure of dramatic representation, directing it to a useful purpose, after, in the person of St. Thomas, formally approving of them as a source of amusement. The devout and mystic St. Bonaventura, following, as he says, Hugo of St. Victor, seems so little inclined to insist on a sacrifice of dramatic literature and dramatic amusement, or to condemn the taste that can appreciate both, that he actually ranks "theatrical skill" among the "sevenfold illuminative arts flowing from the fountain of light, whence all intellectual light proceeds; which external arts are designed either to comfort, or to exclude grief and want, or to be advantageous and useful, or to delight†." A later philosopher has remarked, that the most striking lesson ever read to levity and licentiousness is in a play—the last act of the *Inconstant*, where young Mirabel is preserved by the fidelity of Orinda in the disguise of a page, and that there never was a rake who did not become in imagination a reformed man during the representation of the trying scenes of this comedy. The monks permitted the stage as a source of enjoyment at the time, and as a fund of agreeable reflection afterwards—as a revival of past ages, manners, dresses, persons, and actions. They would have sympathized with Johnson lamenting Garrick, and the Londoners of a later time Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, Liston, and all the rest of those who on the

* Binney.

† *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam.*

stage instructed and gladdened life. We know that in their time our country was called Merry England. In France, too, we find them promoters and admirers of what yields pleasure to the people, making life's business like a summer's dream. "How I wish," writes Mabillon to Sergardi, "that you were here, that in reading the verses of Santeul on the gardens of Versailles, you might walk through them along with me and with the illustrious abbot of Treves!" In a letter to Cardinal d'Aguirre he says that he has just returned from visiting the gardens at Pontoise, which the Cardinal de Bouillon had invited him to see; which gardens, the masterpiece of Le Nostre, had cost 1,800,000 livres. "You must," he says in another letter to the same eminence, "indulge in recreation for health-sake; you must become a boy again, in order that you may again become the man you were. I wish I could excite you to joking and mirthful conversation. Though I am myself so grave, that sometimes I scarcely smile when others laugh, I might be able perhaps to take some sport with you once more; for I would do violence to myself to play the fool for your sake*." In the year 1323 it was in the gardens of the Augustin monks that some poets of Toulouse established the Floral Games which are still in existence, at which prizes of a golden violet were annually given on the first of May, in presence of a vast multitude, for the best song, a silver eglantine for the best pastoral, and a flower of joy, the yellow acacia blossom, for the best ballad. It was a friar and the general of his order, Fray Juan de Ortega, who was supposed to be the author of the charming story of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the parent of those tales in which modern fiction has its birth. "Leaving the courts and the castles, the peers and paladins of conventional romance, the witty author took for his hero a little urchin of Salamanca, and sent him forth to delight Europe with his exquisite humour and vivid pictures of Spanish life, and to win a popularity which was not equalled until the great knight of *La Mancha* took the field†." At his death a manuscript copy of this book was found in his cell, so that, at all events, it was not against such recreations that this zealous and holy reformer of his order sought to protest. Terrible things, no doubt, are said from time to time by men who quote at random sacred texts; but perhaps, after all, it may be allowable to believe that the world, to which Christians are not to be conformed, is not so much the world availing itself of the improvements, discoveries, and facilities of a period of society which puts within the reach of shop-keepers, mechanics, and servant-maids comforts and elegancies that gentlemen and ladies formerly never dreamt of—not so much the

* Lett. cxcix.

† Stirling's Charles V.

world represented by the commonalty and youth, by those whom you might call out-a-door birds, flying from one labour to another, from one exercise of strength, kindness, and generosity to another, and even for recreation applauding together in dramatic assemblies whatever is good, and brave, and devoted, and execrating and ridiculing whatever is base and wicked—repeating even, to justify their confidence, the song of Merry-thought,

“ Better music ne’er was known
 Than a quire of hearts in one.
 Let each other, that hath been
 Troubled with the gall or spleen,
 Learn of us to keep his brow
 Smooth and plain, as ours are now !”—

I say one may be permitted, perhaps, to think that what is condemned is not so much this kind of world, whatever some people may say of it, as that represented by the cankered respectability of Scribes and Pharisees, by in-door birds, persons keeping to themselves, studying their ease and selfish indulgence, counting out their money, fastening like vultures on the fame of every neighbour, scolding their servants, rendering every one under the same roof with them miserable, and doom-ing to perdition all who do not interpret the meaning of the expression world as they do themselves. Such an opinion has, besides its immediate consequences beneficially affecting all minds, the advantage of leaving it in no educated man’s power to think that he enjoys a triumph over Christianity by deliberately avowing that he loves the world and the things of the world ; for if he means the latter kind of world, no one will envy him the freedom of his love ; and if the former, no wise Christian will think it inconsistent. If it be objected that this is lowering religion to the desires of the multitude, we should be reminded, what indeed all the superstitions of the East proclaim, that the danger of mistake and of misrepresentation is not alone on one side, as many at present seem to suppose ; for if there be some who seek to accommodate religion to the tastes of those who seem to love only worldly pleasures, there are always quite as many who seek to render it conformable to their own austere, and narrow, and one-sided, and cruel views of what is Divine ; for the tendency of human nature to seek pleasure is not more constant than that which has for object the rendering religion gloomy and terrible, substituting for the smiles of a gracious Providence the frowns of some vindictive, selfish, or morally distempered man, some other Malevoli, like those we met with on the road of false ascetics, “ whose highest delight is to procure others’ vexation, and who therein think they truly

serve Heaven; whose maxim practically seems to be that who-soever on this earth can be made happy must be punished in the next world, and who, therefore, with a good conscience, afflict all in that to which they are most affected."

"Oh! when the Elesander-leaf looks most green,
The sap is then most bitter: an approv'd appearance
Is no authentic instance: they who are lip-holy
Are many times heart-hollow."

Whether or not such observations can apply to these men, the old monks, at all events, in general seem to have had more enlarged and charitable views of human obligations. Here is one that speaks in another key: this is no cautioning language taught in such academies. He tells us that there may be a process of preparation for the future state, which is not in the slightest degree inconsistent with the enjoyment of all manner of harmless pleasures, but which, on the contrary, gives the greatest zest to them; since a life in which there is nothing serious, in which all is play and diversion, is, beyond all doubt, next to a life of persevering wickedness, the saddest thing under the sun. Whatever happens, these men are for common sense and the natural indication of things, which fact is much in their favour, since, as a modern writer justly says, "the greatest, the most solemn and mischievous absurdities that mankind have been the dupes of, they have imbibed from the dogmatism and vanity or hypocrisy of the self-styled wise and learned." There is nothing in these true and popular philosophers either to excite our disgust, or to make dull the most light-hearted. They who, with St. Thomas, formally teach that recreation being necessary for man, theatres and actors are necessary for man, had a very different kind of language to win the world to virtue from those who sometimes too late discover "that in breeding up a fanatic they have unwittingly laid the foundation of an atheist." The Christian religion, after all, we are repeatedly told, is in many senses distinguished from all the human systems of the world by the liberty and naturalness to which it invites its children, and by its antagonism to the spirit of the Oriental superstitions respecting self-sacrifice. The monachism of Catholicity seems not to be in contradiction to this glorious privilege, for it only provides for exceptional wants which some persons using their liberty experience, and it recognizes the free exemption of all who have not those wants. It does not desire to see all men wrapped up in hoods; nor does it present or sanction any women, according to the Oriental manner, sheeted up in hiicks, with only one eye visible. It says to those who wish to be austere, Be austere, but with moderation, with good sense, with charity; and to those who prefer the smiles of truth it says, Be cheerful, natural, indulgent, kind; only use not liberty as a

cloak for that licentiousness which is the enemy of cheerfulness, of nature, of indulgence, and of kindness. Now here again we have an index pointing at the truth of the religion which produces teachers of this character, since, after all, it is such guides that humanity requires. The Church which forms and employs them has, accordingly, the secret for attaching mankind to herself; and what else can account for this attraction, but the fact that she is adapted to the end for which she exists, which is to retain men from going far astray either to the right or to the left? That she does possess this attraction is incontestable. Men may refuse on many subjects to follow her, but they will never forsake her utterly. As a popular writer wittily says, "They look upon her as they do upon an old family nurse, from whom they willingly accept such comforts as she is qualified to administer, though they like to have their own way on matters beyond her sphere of control. In their estimation she is the family nurse; and though they often hear her accused of being a spiteful old crone when angry, still she is the regular family nurse, and has been established as a fixture in the house for many generations. Of course she opposes them in some things, but they feel that she is bound to do so; and they know that in this respect, in the long run, she is far more indulgent than another would be, if they could even succeed in replacing her by philosophy, or by some new religion, which would infallibly soon turn sour. They know, however, that there is no getting rid of her. There is no killing her; she is one of the dramatis personæ that bow to the audience at the dropping of the curtain*."

But we must now look at the other side of the medal; for if man wants recreation, and freedom in his means of using it, he has need also at other times of reflection, and of being occupied with the great central truths of religion; since, if the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions. We find many directions given as to the manner in which the monastic religious instruction was to be conveyed. The Franciscans were to preach "short and well-examined discourses †;" and Grostete, bishop of Lincoln, used to say publicly that the Franciscans, by reason of their poverty, were of all priests the most fit to instruct and reform Christian people; in fact, he made use of them to preach in all his episcopal visitations. "Blessed Francis," says Buccius, "was sent at a time when the way of perfection was less trodden than at present; and men, benetted in sins, knew not the way of escape, or knowing rejected it; and the benefit of the passion of Christ seemed to be almost forgotten in the midst of violence

* Fam. Herald.

† Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica.

and oppression, for neither his passion was ever meditated on, nor was Christ crucified attached secretly as a bundle of myrrh within the bowels of sufferers. Therefore was St. Francis sent that he should preach and recal Christians to the way of charity*." Such, no doubt, was the mission to which his order, like every other, was appointed; and in consequence many were preserved from the miseries of a disordered world. As Bucchius says elsewhere, "By means of the personal labour of the Franciscans dispersed over the earth, innumerable men were drawn to God; and, moreover, by their books men were spiritually and morally benefited; for what a number of books has this order produced for the reformation of manners, for enlightening minds, for defence of the faith, for the extirpation of vices, for the advancement of the spiritual life, for the useful and agreeable information of mankind, for the elevation of the mind to contemplation, for inspiring the desire of heaven, for devotion and imitation of the Crucified, for the contempt of riches, and for the renouncement of selfishness†!" It was the religious sense, if one may use such an expression, that the monastic teaching revived or maintained in the world—the concrete of sentiment, including love and honour, morality and religion, the decay of all which leads a modern English writer to say, "We are sometimes inclined to regret the innovations on the Catholic religion. It was a noble charter for what may be perhaps after all 'the sovereign'st things on earth;' and it put an effectual stop to the vanity and restlessness of opinion‡." "We would rather," he continues, "have the feeling of respecting what is above us, than be possessed of all the acuteness of Bayle or the wit of Voltaire. It may be considered," he goes on to say, "as a sign of the decay of piety and learning in modern times, that our divines no longer introduce texts of the original Scriptures into their sermons. The very sound of the original would impress the hearer more than any translation, however literal or correct. It may be doubted whether the translation of the Scriptures into the vulgar tongue was any advantage to the people. The general purport of the truths and promises of revelation was made known by other means; and nothing beyond this general and implicit conviction can be obtained where all is undefined and infinite." So far this exact and profound thinker. But to return to the pulpit of the monks. The intentions of the monastic teachers were to be pure and generous; and St. Bernardine said the Holy Ghost never fails to direct and assist in a special manner those who with a simple intention aim in their instructions at the honour

* Bucchius, *Liber Aureus Conformitatum Vitæ B. Pat. Francisci ad Vitam J. Christi*, 24.

† Bucchius, 165.

‡ Hazlitt's *Round Table*.

of God alone. The monks, too, require that there should be provision for the varieties of character, employment, and destination of men. "Of instructors, therefore," as a great writer says, "some are to be severe and grave, that they may win such, and check sometimes those who be of nature over-confident and jocund; others are sent more cheerful, free, and still as it were at large, in the midst of an untrespassing honesty, that they who are so tempered may have by whom they might be drawn to salvation, and they who are too scrupulous and dejected of spirit may be often strengthened with wise consolations; no man being forced wholly to dissolve that groundwork of nature which God created in him, the sanguine to empty out all his sociable liveliness, or those otherwise biassed to expel quite the unerring predominance of their disposition; but that each radical humour and passion, wrought upon and corrected as it ought, may be made the proper mould and foundation of every man's peculiar gifts and virtues." But it is less to rules than to examples that we should look, in order to understand the character of these instructors.

*"Sanctum nectar olens doctæ facundia linguæ
In mentes hominum Christi inspirabat amorem."*

This effect, which Baptist the Mantuan ascribes to the preaching of St. Hilary, was a general object with the monastic teacher. The celebrated letter of St. Francis of Assisi to all Christians, monks and clerics, laics, men and women, who live through the whole world, begins with these words, which are very characteristic of the simple and sublime language of the monks, always easy, falling unstudied from their pens; not like a spell big with mysterious sounds, such as enchant the half-witted, and confound the ignorant:—"O quam benedicti sunt et beati," he only says, "qui Deum diligunt et faciunt sicut Dominus dicit in Evangelio 'Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, ex tota anima tua, et proximum sicut te ipsum.' Diligamus ergo Deum et adoremus eum puro corde, et pura mente; quia super omnia hoc quærens dixit: veri adoratores adorabunt Deum Patrem in spiritu et veritate." Vincent the Carthusian ascribes to St. Bruno a similar style of instruction, when addressing the world in these lines:—

*"Discite mundano vos qui insudatis honori,
Qui caput erigitis, tumidum qui pectus habetis
Præsenti speculo, et tanta dulcedine moti,
Alta supercilia elatæ deponere frontis."*

Still it was not merely by their religious themes that these teachers attracted men. Antonio de Guevara tells Don Alphonso Pimitel, count of Benavante, that he will find in the letter which he has addressed to him many things "lesquelles pour les vieux Gentils hommes seront agreables à scavoir et aux

jeunes nécessaires à imiter." Nothing was to be kept back that could benefit or sweeten human life, for the monks were to be torches, not sepulchral lights covered up in vaults. So we are told that in the twelfth century Geroch, abbot of Reechersperg in Bavaria, was like a beacon, not only to all Germany, but to France, Hungary, and even Greece; and that such grace was on his lips that even those whom he reproved most loved him; great men, as well as the least of the people, whether in the church or in private conversations, being observed to hang upon his sweet and salutary words*. Under his portrait, which used to be shown in that monastery, these lines were inscribed: "A.D. 1133 Dominus Gerhohus S. S. Theologiæ Doctor insignis tertius hujus loci Præpositus creatur. Hic in corrigendis magnatum moribus laboravit †."

Consulted on all kinds of subjects, the inhabitants of these retreats are found to be men who can always be depended on for giving their opinion honestly, and without any view to ingratiate themselves with the powerful. Dominic Serrano, eleventh general of the Order of Mercy, towards the end of his career, was drawn from his retirement in the convent of Barcelona, at the prayers of Robert, king of Naples, and sent to that capital by his superiors. Soon after his arrival, the king, who was surrounded with flatterers, asked him to read a book of epigrams which he had composed, and give him his opinion of its merit. The good father read it, and then told him to beware lest he should lose by his pen the reputation which he had acquired by his valour. He added that many of his epigrams, as that against the duke of Ferrara, were opposed to charity, that the medley of matter did not fulfil what he had engaged to do in his preface; and that in the republic of letters, the prince and the subject being equal, the public might perhaps lose its respect for his majesty; therefore, he said, in fine, it was his deliberate opinion that it would be best not to publish the work ‡. The Emperor Otho III., taking leave of St. Nilus in his retreat, said to him, "Ask of me whatever you wish, and I will give it to you with joy." The old man placed his hands against the heart of Otho, and replied, "Of all your empire, I only ask from you the salvation of your soul." The emperor wept, took off his crown, placed it in the hermit's hand, knelt down, and asked his blessing §. Mathieu Paris says that the Dominicans and Franciscans above all whom the King Henry III. venerated and favoured gave him wise political advice, and exhorted him earnestly to take for his native subjects the sentiments of affection which he owed to them ||. But it is not the great only who are benefited by the monastic lessons. Wherever monks are

* Raderus, ii. 285.

+ Id.

† Hist. de l'Ordre de la Mercy, 284.

§ Act. S. Nili.

|| Ad ann. 1233.

found, the lower orders are provided with familiar instruction and congenial guides. As Adalbert found in the monastery on Mount Aventine, "*Pluebant ibi sermones Dei, accense sententie mutuo cursant.*" The sermons of Diego de San Geronimo, prior of St. Yuste early in the fifteenth century, were so esteemed by the population of the Vera, that his memory was long handed down in the names of a road leading to Garganta la Olla, and of a bridge near Xaraiz, constructed when he grew old and infirm by the people of those places to smooth the path of their favourite preacher to their village pulpits*. On days of great festival the church of that convent used to be thronged with strangers; and while the Emperor Charles V. was assisting at the office in a dress of ceremony, and wearing the collar of the golden fleece, the crowd from distant villages was so little neglected by the friars, that a second office and sermon used to take place for them outside, beneath the shadow of the great walnut-tree of Yuste. At the abbey of Monte Cassino in 1669 was instituted a confraternity of Christian doctrine among the agricultural labourers, having an oratory in the neighbouring village of St. Germain, which they adorned†. Few monasteries existed without producing similar results among the neighbouring population.

But it will be said perhaps immediately by some who are reminded of these facts that they signified nothing, for that all the religious orders favour and promote superstition. If it were so, there ought to be an end indeed of apology; but it so happens that this is an opinion which is diametrically opposed to the evidence before us. Unquestionably monks as well as other men are found in early ages more or less affected by the abuses and ignorance of the times. It would be strange if it were otherwise; but modern establishments perhaps have nothing to boast of in their exemption from these stains. A carriage which has travelled a long way through every variety of soil, having experienced rains, and snow, and tempests, must be expected to arrive in a very different condition from another that has only passed for three miles in comparatively bright weather through a park. The Church has come to us through the roads of Roman civilization, of northern barbarism, of feudal wars, of despotic tyrannies, a length of eighteen centuries; and it would be marvellous if we could not trace on its exterior some marks of long and rude service which are not visible on a vehicle that only started three centuries ago, when the difficulties of civilization were nearly removed. But what stain or disarrangement have not the monks in later times opposed? And even if you go back to their first stages, and follow them through the darkest parts of the night, are they not seen the most intelligent and careful guides that those hours could furnish? One need

* Stirling's Charles V.

† Hist. Cass. xii. 816.

not here fall into a paroxysm of citations to prove that the monks endeavoured to correct superstitions ; a fact or two must suffice. We find, then, that it was an abbot of Pontigny, John de la Paix, who in 1401 persuaded the canons of Auxerre to abolish the Fête des Fous. In the middle ages, as innumerable homilies can attest, it was the monks who preached, like St. Eloi, against the superstitions of the rural population ; so little did they resemble the philosopher Strabo, who says that it is most important to maintain superstition among women and the promiscuous multitude, and that for this purpose fables and wonders are absolutely necessary *. In later times it was Mabillon who wrote against the abuses which had crept in with regard to false relics. It was Dom Thuillier who lamented the ridiculous manner in which many lives of saints were written, saying, " The saints do not instruct us less by their defects than by their virtues. Would it not be a fault in their historians to have only miracles and praises to publish respecting them ? Why not show us also the man, to teach us how the man became a saint ? As for the dispute with M. de Rance," he continues, " the vehemence with which this illustrious abbot tries to make use of reasons, which to moderate men appear not worthy of the name of reasons, can teach us how persons of strong and lively imaginations ought to be distrustful of themselves, and on their guard against prejudices, uncertain reports, precipitous judgments ; and with what care they ought to distinguish between zeal and indiscretion, between a real duty and an imaginary perfection." The maxim of the cloister under such guides has been that of Pope Innocent III., "*Falsitas tolerari non debet sub velamine pietatis ;*" and its views of imitation in regard to the saints were conformable to what St. Isidore lays down, saying, "*Perfectorum est jam virorum non quemlibet sanctorum imitando, sed ipsam veritatem intueno, ad cujus imaginem facti sunt justitiam operari†.*" In fact, to answer the charge of superstition in general brought against members of the monastic profession, one need only consult the letters of the Benedictines of St. Maur, of whom M. Valery, their recent editor, says, " Their history is an argument in favour of Christianity ; for here we find grave, sensible minds more inclined to freedom of thought than to mysticism, profoundly versed in the science of the Scriptures, of the fathers, of ecclesiastical antiquities, and with this knowledge of difficulties the most firm of believers. The consent of such men seems more convincing than that of more elevated geniuses under the influence of the imagination and of sensibility, to whom may be opposed adversaries of the same force, and no less glorious ‡." But time (for our sand is already far spent) will not permit us to

* Lib. i.

† De Sum. Bono, ii. c. 11.

‡ Correspondance de Mabillon et de Montfaucon, tom. i. p. préface.

remain longer here. There is an argumentum ad hominem, however, which must be used in conclusion ; for the disgrace of theorizing upon superstition, and the horror of its practical consequences, pre-eminently belong to those who hated the religious orders. Jewel was no monk, and preaching before Elizabeth he said, " It may please your grace to understand that witches and sorcerers within these four last years are marvellously increased within your grace's realm ; your subjects pine away even unto death, their colour fadeth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft ; I pray God they never practise farther than the subject." You will find no such fears expressed by a Thomas Aquinas or a St. Bernard. The Puritans and the Presbyterians were not influenced by the monastic spirit when more than 3000 persons suffered for witchcraft during the Long Parliament alone. But without referring to past times, look now around you in England. In Sussex you have no monasteries ; and there, if riding a piebald horse, mothers will scream after you from cottage doors, inviting you to cure their children who have the hooping cough by speaking to them while mounted on a steed of that colour. In Nottinghamshire you have no monasteries ; and there farmers, through a superstitious fear, will not suffer an egg to be taken from their house after sunset on any consideration whatever. In Kent you have no monasteries ; and there, within sight of Canterbury, you had only a few years ago an armed troop prepared to fight for a new Messiah. In Devonshire you have no monasteries ; and what is the condition of its population now ? Hear the author of Household Words ; no suspected witness, I suppose. " The sun," he says, " is very bright in Devonshire upon our leaves and flowers. Our myrtles flower, and our magnolias climb to the house-top, but our human minds—nothing enlightens them, they do not flower, they do not rise above the level of the dust. There are to be found amongst us even farmers, paying rent at the rate of three or four hundred a year, who cannot spell or write, better than dogs or horses can, the names to which they answer. There is among us much vague religious feeling, and that, added to ignorance, makes superstition. Nothing is more common here than to consult the White Witch when a sheep or a spoon has vanished ; assaults against some poor old woman who has been suspected of Black witchcraft are of continual occurrence. I speak advisedly, as one who, being a magistrate, has for twenty years had the best means of becoming acquainted with these things. Our sky is propitious, and our orchards bear much fruit ; but the human orchard does not quite grow or flourish as one might desire in Devonshire." After all this, methinks, in these counties at least, it will be quite as well to cease holding up the religious orders to censure on the ground of their being propagators of superstition.

But to return to a consideration of their general character as popular instructors. William of Newbury, speaking of the monks of Fountains and Rievaulx in Yorkshire, says that "the Lord blessed them with the benedictions of heaven above measure, so that not alone they collected a copious multitude around them in the service of Almighty God, but they were able to dispense immense alms among the poor; moreover, that they supplied many other colleges with efficient members, not alone through the English provinces, but in barbarous nations*." The monks were sought after as instructors for the very reason that they were men who generally lived in retirement. Men, like trees, are affected by locality. The position of a tree, as Goethe says, the nature of the soil on which it grows, and the trees which surround it, all these exert a powerful influence on its formation. An oak growing on the windy westerly summit of a hill is very differently formed from an oak springing from the soft soil of a sheltered valley. So is it with men. "They who went to the desert," says Antonio de Escobar, "sought one who was not likely to be an adulator, a reed shaken by the wind. If you ask how came Herod to have such a high opinion of John, I answer, that it was from his flying the world, and having his dwelling in the wilderness." It is an impression of this kind which makes the instruction of these men so effective and popular. The people, as the public, can get public experience; but, as a great author says, they wish their teacher to replace to them those private, sincere, divine experiences, of which they have been defrauded by dwelling in the street. It is the delicately noble, the manly and strictly just thought which is what they demand of him; and as not the crowd, but solitude, confers this elevation, it follows that the mere secular guide has not so eminently this power; in fact, he seldom can dare to pretend to it. "In the street what has he to say to the bold blasphemer? The blasphemer sees fear in the face, form, and gait of the very man whose office perhaps it is to teach him;" whereas the monk stands intrepidly, and yet, with all the firmness arising from his conscience, full of smiles. His cheerfulness reminds one of what Vasari says of Leonardo da Vinci, "that the radiance of his countenance brought joy to the heart of the most melancholy, and that the power of his words could move the most obstinate to say 'No' or 'Yes' as he desired." How beautiful also it is to see how this learned and profound man can let down his mind to the level of others, taking pleasure in their thoughts and enjoyments, and assenting to a thousand truisms, one after another, produced by some of inferior understanding, as if they were remarkable propositions, though familiar to him

as his finger-ends. The reason is, to use Hazlitt's words, "that he pierces deeper into the nature of the human being beside him, can make his very deficiencies subservient to his own speculations, and, above all, knows that there is something worth all the knowledge and talent upon earth, which is an honest heart and a genial nature." It is thus that the monk differs from the secular man of superior abilities. But observe him again more closely. We have seen that love frustrated had often led men to embrace this state of life. Perhaps, too, this partly explains in some instances the influence which they exercised over others. True, there has come to them a nearer bliss; a new love has come, "Felicity's abyss! It comes, and the old does fade and fade away—yet not entirely; no, that starry sway has been an under-passion to this hour." The traces of pleasure in their case has sunk into an absorbent ground of thoughtful melancholy, and only requires to be brought out by time and circumstances, or, as Hazlitt adds, "by the varnish of style," to produce impressions of the deepest kind. After having suffered thus they kept secret their calamity; they kept it solely to themselves; they purified it with simplicity in silence; at intervals they would retire to it as to a sanctuary or to a tomb to which there were short paths known only to themselves, and from that mysterious spot they would return each time with an undefinable emotion, and with a singular expression that fascinated men not knowing whence it was derived, but feeling that it disposed them to listen with breathless attention to their words, and to unite their heart with theirs.

On the whole, however, whatever may have been the cause, great undoubtedly were the impressions which the monks produced on those who heard them. Let us observe some instances. "The sweetness and affability of St. Peter of Alcantara were," says his biographer, "most remarkable." Jerome de Loaisa heard many persons say, that however difficult and opposed to their inclination a thing might be, they would instantly do it when he proposed it, finding it absolutely impossible to contradict him in any thing*. "Blessed is that religious man," said St. Francis, "who has no joy nor satisfaction but in pious entertainments and discourses of God, thereby to induce and allure men with pleasantness and mirth to the love of their Creator †." "A certain youth," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, "living in the house of a rich knight as his servant, though very virtuous, was tempted to commit a crime; but repairing to take counsel from a neighbouring hermit, to whom he disclosed his passion, the holy man made light of it, and replied, 'Only repeat the angelic salutation a certain num-

* Marchese, *Vie du Saint*, iv. 9.

† Weston, c. iii. 15.

ber of times every day for a year, and you will be freed from it;’ for he knew,” adds the narrator, “that our Blessed Lady would never desert a young man who wished to be virtuous; and when the youth complied, he was delivered ever after from the temptation*.” Let the difficulty be of what kind it may, men respect such a guide, and think better of virtue for its having made him. In the end they seek him, as a great author says, “in order that he may turn his lamp upon the dark riddles whose solution they think is inscribed on the walls of their being.” “At Venice, in 1418, Father Gabriel, the Augustinian of Spoleto, preached with wonderful fruit,” says an historian of his order. “The minds of all, especially of the nobles, were so attached to him, that they could scarcely be torn away from him. Renowned at Madrid was Father Francis à Castro Verde, called Regis Concionator et Rex Concionatorum, who in freedom of speech was another Ambrose, and in refusing honours and dignities more than a Bernard; for he refused five times the mitre, and not these only, but all superfluous goods, in order that he might be a true evangelic preacher, with John the Baptist, before kings and princes, with a fearless front becoming the voice of one proclaiming penance in the wilderness †.”

The monk taught often to his last breath. Brother Richard Middleton, a Franciscan of great sanctity, while preaching one day in Paris, became all of a sudden silent. After an hour, resuming his discourse, he took leave of all his audience with a most serene countenance, and so departed this life in peace ‡. The very locality seems somewhat to aid the effect produced by the monastic voice. In the Capuchin churches of Switzerland, as in most ancient monasteries, the preacher is seen to issue directly from the interior of the convent by a door which opens into the pulpit, which is attached to the wall. He seems to leave his retreat only to speak to the people; and then what is it to hear that tongue, whose sweetness angels might adore! But taking another point of view, it may be observed that these instructors are often familiarly and personally known to all classes of the population, and that what they sought was an immediate practical result. Father Gregory Olivet, monk of the Order of Mercy in the time of Don Pedro IV., king of Arragon, having to preach one Sunday in a certain village, found the peasants in such consternation that they could not assemble to hear him. On inquiring the cause, they told him that the captain of banditti in the mountains had sent them word, that if on a particular day they did not furnish him with a given quantity

* vii. c. 33.

† Crusenius, Monastic. August. p. iii. c. 47.

‡ Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, 123.

of meat, bread, and wine, he would burn down their houses. The father went with the persons deputed to convey the tribute, and waited for the robbers. As soon as they approached, he began to preach from the text, "*Custodiens parvulos Dominus,*" and spoke of the necessity of dying, and the judgment of God, and the glory of Paradise; and the banditti were so moved, that they renounced that course of life*.

The Franciscan brother, Antonius Segoviensis, at the end of his sermons, used to teach the people the method of confessing. Brother Michael Baree, when he travelled in the country, would often go out of the way to find ploughmen and shepherds, whom he left not till he had prevailed with them to make their confessions, which he used to hear sitting upon their ploughs in the fields. Brother Theodorick of Munster, during a plague which reigned at Brussels, went thither, and heard the confessions of more than 32,000 persons. Thus were whole populations reformed, directed, and trained to the most happy life; and might not therefore every statesman and every father of a family, alluding to such men, exclaim with Capulet, and on stronger grounds than he possessed,

"Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,
All our whole city is much bound to him?"

Addressing St. Albert, Baptist the Mantuan says, "*Sic meritis adjuncta tuis Mesana revixit.*" And is not this fact significant? For must it not be a true religion which by its institutions recalls to life a whole city; which produces and sends forth men, age after age, who reform nations, the result of whose labours, if not counteracted, would be to make children more dutiful, tradesmen more honest, subjects more loyal, senators more true lovers of their country, with all its rights, and men of every condition more just in their dealings, more generous, amiable, and kind-hearted to every one in private life, more constant and disinterested in their service of the public? Methinks against such reformatations no voice need be lifted up. But when have such consequences been witnessed where Catholicism and its institutions, or at least the principles which have their centre in that faith, have been wholly excluded? What nations were morally benefited by the revolted preachers of the sixteenth century, some of whose admirers are now sending forth books of dogmatic scepticism, and expositions of the non-existence of virtue and honour? Is it they who introduced any thing noble, elevated, generous, or conformable to nature, that we see around us? It is one still following their banner who says, seeking though, perhaps, to throw out the light of his picture by darkening the rest beyond what truth requires, "When I remember what the English people

* Hist. de l'Ord. de la Mercey, 272.

once was—the truest, the freest, and the bravest, the best-natured and the best-looking, the happiest and most religious race upon the surface of this globe,—and think of them now, with all their crimes and all their slavish sufferings; their soured spirits, and their stunted forms; their lives without enjoyment, and their deaths without hope, I may well feel for them, even if I were not of their blood.” Or again, what country and city of any age was recalled to the life of virtue by those philosophers with whom the monks are so often contrasted, for the purpose of being defamed and vilified? You talk of Seneca—of Lucius Annaeus Seneca! Out upon him! “He wrote on temperance and fortitude, yet lived like a voluptuous epicure, and died like an effeminate coward.” You point at Athens; but assuredly, says a great writer, “if the tree which Socrates planted and Plato watered is to be judged of by its flowers and leaves, it is the noblest of trees. But if we take the homely test of Bacon—if we judge of the tree by its fruits—our opinion of it may, perhaps, be less favourable. Take the Stoics again. After they had been declaiming eight hundred years, had they made the world better than when they began? Our belief is,” adds this writer, “that among the philosophers themselves, instead of a progressive improvement, there was a progressive degeneracy. The truth is, that in those very matters in which alone they professed to do any good to mankind—in those very matters for the care of which they neglected all the vulgar interests of mankind, they did nothing, or worse than nothing. They promised what was impracticable; they despised what was practicable; they filled the world with long words and long beards, and they left it as wicked and as ignorant as they found it.” “I thought you taught two vices for one virtue,” says Flowerdew, in the Muses’ Looking-Glass. “So does philosophy,” is the reply.

But it is not alone by books, by lessons, and formal religious instructions that the monks and holy sisters contribute to the moral training of mankind. They produce an influence by their familiar conversations, and even while holding their peace most vocally by their example, which, though not in all respects intended as a rule for other persons, must keep the minds of those who behold or remember them conversant with images of high virtue, and produce an effect in the world like the hayawa-tree in the forests of South America, which perfumes the woods around it. Their very looks are fair examples; their common and indifferent actions, rules and strong ties of virtue. “There are sublime merits,” says a modern writer; “persons who are not actors, not speakers, but influences—persons too great for fame, for display; who disdain eloquence; to whom all we call art and artist seems too nearly allied to show and by-ends—to the exaggeration of the finite and selfish, and loss of the uni-

versal." Unintentionally this is a very accurate picture of the monastic character. The monks of Mount Serrat lived in such retreat that the pilgrims saw them only in the church. But the spiritual profit which was derived from that glimpse, and from hearing what they did, was never questioned. "The sole presence," says Pierre Mathieu, "of a good man, who has no other views but those of religion, can often extinguish bad resolutions. His silence is sufficient to make men abandon a measure as wrong. When one sees a monk become cardinal, who has left nothing of his profession but his hood, undaunted in dangers, happy in adversity, firm in tempests, and with a soul surmounting all the grandeurs of the world as beneath it, one is constrained to confess that he is something more than a common man. Such characters, in fact, have a power to reform, not alone actions, but even thoughts—telles gens sont assez puissans pour reformer non seulement les actions mais encore les pensées*." There is nothing about them, we must repeat it, like that false asceticism which we noted on a former road; nothing like that air of irksome regularity, gloominess, and pedantry attached to the virtuous characters of Richardson, which is so apt to encourage unfortunate associations, though the tales of that author, so strictly moral, were recommended from the pulpit by Sherlock, and compared to the Bible by another learned admirer. "Catholics," says Hazlitt, "are, upon the whole, more amiable than Protestants†." It is an amiable opponent who can entertain or utter such a thought; but it seems less difficult and meritorious to admit that monastics, at all events, seem free from the defects which often accompany piety in the world. It must strike those who observe them as if they really present and produce many contrasts to the features which this author ascribes to those whom he terms disagreeable people. They are not generally, for instance, "fault-finders, like those persons who are of so teasing and fidgety a turn of mind that they do not give you a moment's rest, every thing going wrong with them. Let you be what you may, they do not seem to speculate upon you, or regard you with a view to an experiment in corpore vili, having the principle of dissection, the determination to spare no blemishes, to cut you down to your real standard. They do not evince an utter absence of the partiality of friendship, of the enthusiasm of affection, like those well-meaning friends on whom a dull, melancholy vapour hangs, that drags them, and every one about them, to the ground; to whose monotonous intercourse even the trifling of summer friends seems preferable. They are not like persons who stop

* Hist. de Hen. IV. liv. ii.

† Men and Manners, p. 123.

you in an excursion of fancy, or ransack the articles of your belief obstinately and churlishly to distinguish the spurious from the genuine, having no conceptions beyond what they designate as propriety." Intercourse with the old monastic characters would probably yield "that increased kindness of judgment towards the common world of men who do not show any religious development" that a modern writer speaks of, acknowledging how pleasant it was to him to look on an ordinary face, and see it light up into a smile, and to think with himself, "There is one heart that will judge of me by what I am, and not by a Procrustean dogma."

It is remarkable in the nineteenth century to hear Goethe acknowledge that even the monastic habit exercises an influence for good. On meeting a Benedictine of Monte Cassino in Naples at the house of a friend, he says, "The regular clergy have great advantage in society. Their costume is a mark of humility and renunciation of self, while at the same time it lends to its wearers a decidedly dignified appearance. They may, without degrading themselves, appear submissive, and again their self-respect sits well upon them." It is, perhaps, to the wisdom, the practical popular wisdom, which reigned in these communities, that we may partly ascribe the indulgence and charitable views respecting the faults of mankind which are characteristic of the old Catholic civilization, favouring hopes which will not deceive, and virtues which are merciful. While rigid moralists, like Touchstone, are saying of every poor offender that resembles his apprentice Quicksilver, "Appear terrible unto him on the first interview; let him behold the melancholy of a magistrate, and taste the fury of a citizen in office," the habit of calm contemplation, and of practical familiarity with the misfortunes of the miserable, whom it is their mission to console, render the monks and friars, and all persons consecrated to religion, those tolerant, kind, and charitable characters which they are represented to be by Shakspere and all our oldest dramatists, who certainly knew them better than the journalists and travellers of the present day. "Men of deep and vehement character in Protestantism," says a remarkable writer, "are liable to be carried away by a stern detestation of what they call the baseness of mankind, till it reacts upon themselves. They think it not worth while to regard how they treat such wretches as they believe mankind to be, or in what light they appear to them. Swift thus speaks of human brutes, declares that he does not value mankind a rush, and that he will never be a philanthropist, because the animal itself is now a creature, taking a vast majority, that he hates more than a toad, a viper, a wasp, a fox, or any other that you would please to add." A man of central principles can never view mankind in such a light as this—ex-

clusively in their degradation, or without remembering that it was for such persons Christ died. Catholic principles clear the judgment, and prevent men from taking exaggerated views of human depravity. Moreover, those monks and nuns whose thoughts are now in heaven, were, at some period or another, living in the world like ourselves.

“True, they are purest lipp’d, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart’s core.”

They have known our feelings and sentiments, experienced our weaknesses, and participated in humanity. They are not inclined, therefore, to add a fresh frown to morals or religion. Even from the titles which some of them assume in their consecrated state, as when we hear of Sister Louisa de la Miséricorde, we might infer that their character was indulgent and benign to sinners. We read of others that they were especially attracted by the holy humanity of our Lord; of others, like Mother Magdalen of St. Joseph, that they were kind and charitable to persons of every description, and that they used to love sensibly those who had an affection for them. Holy saints are all relenting sweetness. It is not they who would teach Time to speak eternally of our disgraces, make records to keep them in brass. Madame de Longueville, speaking of the superiress of the Carmelites, says, “She used always to speak of persons opposed to her with great kindness and charity, representing their fault in as favourable a point of view as possible. I used to remark, also, that whenever any one in her presence spoke unfavourably of another, whatever that other person might be, if she could not discover an excuse for her, she used to throw the blame on the fragility of nature, and not on the malice of the person; and she used to communicate this disposition to excuse to those who heard her, not merely by her exhortations, but as if imparting to them a share in her grace of charity.” It is truly, then, the mind of such persons which a modern poet beautifully unfolds in an anonymous publication. It is the monk or holy sister who will always recognize, in opposition to shallow or unfeeling formalists, that “we’ve all our angel side.” But hear the lines of our contemporary:—

“Despair not of the better part
That lies in human kind—
A gleam of light still flickereth
In e’en the darkest mind.
Despair not! oh! despair not, then,
For through this world so wide,
No nature is so demon-like,
But there’s an angel side.

"The huge rough stones from out the mine,
Unightly and unfair,
Have veins of purest metal hid
Beneath the surface there;
Few rocks so bare but to their heights
Some tiny moss-plant clings,
And round the peaks so desolate
The sea-bird sits and sings.
Believe me, too, that rugged souls,
Beneath their rudeness, hide
Much that is beautiful and good—
We've all our angel side.

"In all there is an inner depth—
A far-off, secret way,
Where, through dim windows of the soul,
God sends his smiling ray;
In every human heart there is
A faithful sounding chord,
That may be struck, unknown to us,
By some sweet loving word;
The wayward heart in vain may try
Its softer thoughts to hide,
Some unexpected tone reveals
It has its angel side.

"Despised, and low, and trodden down,
Dark with the shade of sin,
Deciphering not those halo lights
Which God hath lit within;
Groping about in utmost night,
Poor prison'd souls there are,
Who guess not what life's meaning is,
Nor dream of heaven afar;
Oh! that some gentle hand of love
Their stumbling steps would guide,
And show them that, amidst it all,
Life has its angel side.

"Brutal, and wild, and dark enough,
God knows some natures are,
But He compassionate comes near,
And shall we stand afar?
Our cruse of oil will not grow less,
If shared with hearty hand,
And words of peace, and looks of love,
Few natures can withstand.
Love is the mighty conqueror—
Love is the beautiful guide—
Love, with her beaming eye, can see
We've all our angel side *."

Many instances are recorded in history of young persons who had been renounced by their austere parents, either through unjust prejudice, or from despairing of their amendment, who, by the kind instrumentality of monks and nuns, were in a short time either restored to the favour they were entitled to, or so changed in disposition as to become an honour to their families. Sandro Botticelli, the Florentine painter, thus owed every thing to the Carmelite friar, Fra Filippo; and Du Guesclin himself, who saved his country, seems to have been another example, for it was an abbess who first inspired him with the idea that he could do any thing praiseworthy. While the father, or even the mother, forgetting womanhood and natural goodness, says, like the citizen in the old play to the calm friend, "If there were a thousand boys, thou wouldst spoil them all with taking their parts; let his mother alone with him," the messenger of heaven replies, "You're too bitter; the young man may do well enough for all this." That one word, perhaps, being overheard by him, has saved him; and the scenes, from first to last, have only to be related by the pen of a Fanny Fern to make the hooded friend as popular as Tabettha in the charming little tale of "Hatty."

It was the saying of one of the old philosophers, that when men renounce possessions, they are not only teachers, but witnesses of truth; and St. Ambrose says that the mere beholding of such men is beneficial. "*Justi aspectus in plerisque, admonitionis correctio, perfectioribus lætitia est.*" St. Francis, writing to all the brethren of his order, expressly tells them that they are sent as witnesses. "Whenever," he says to them, "you hear the name of God mentioned, adore Him with fear and reverence prostrate on the earth. God hath sent you into the world in order that, by word and deed, you should give testimony to Him, and make all men know that there is no other besides Him." This external action is expressly required by the rule of St. Francis. "When you travel on a journey," said the seraphic father, "your conversation should be the same as if you were in your cell or in the desert. For wherever we may be, we ought to have our cell with us, in which our mind may rest as a hermit. In the name of the Lord, proceed on your way, two by two, humbly and decorously, and in strict silence; from the dawn till after tierce praying to the Lord in your hearts; and when you do converse among the faithful, your words should be as humble and as decorous as if you were in your hermitage or your cell." Similarly, in the constitutions of the Dominicans, it is said, "*Qui accepta benedictione exeuntes, ubique tanquam viri qui suam et aliorum salutem pro-*

curare desiderant religiose et honeste se habeant, sicut viri evangelici, sui sequentes vestigia Salvatoris *.” “We should daily preach by our silence,” says the ancient rule of solitaries—“*tacendo prædicare*—showing men the example of light †.” “When you go forth,” say again the Dominican constitutions, “in inessu, statu, habitu, et in omnibus motibus vestris, nihil fiat quod cujusquam offendat aspectum, sed quod vestram deceat sanctitatem.”

Mildness, cheerfulness, and kindness characterize the friar's manner towards all persons. He shows himself a man of a soft, moving clay, not made of flint. Though roughly clad, his manners are as gentle and as fair as theirs who brag themselves born only heirs to all humanity. “If I cannot correct men,” said St. Francis, “by preaching and example, it is not for me to act the executioner, and punish like the secular power.” That power, too, heard from their lips such words as

“The greatest attribute of Heaven is mercy;
And 'tis the crown of justice, and the glory,
Where it may kill with right, to save with pity.”

Members of religious orders seem constantly led, by a sort of generous prejudice in favour of human nature, to admit all possible palliations for the conduct of the individual delinquent; they never attempt to shut him out from the benefit of those sympathies of which all persons are occasionally the objects. Their language is that of our old dramatist,

“Let them repent them, and be not detected.
It is not manly to take joy or pride
In human errors: we do all ill things;
They do them worst that love them, and dwell there.
——— Those who have the seeds
Of goodness left will sooner make their way
To a true life by love than punishment.”

As being eminently influenced by the Catholic notions of perfection, this, I believe, is what the monk or friar would say; and the contrast presented to such sentiments by all he heard around him, inspired our poet with these beautiful lines:

“With sweet kind natures, as in honey'd cells,
Religion lives, and feels herself at home;
But only on a formal visit dwells
Where wasps instead of bees have form'd the comb.
Shun pride, O Rae!—whatever sort beside
You take in lieu, shun spiritual pride!

* Constitut. Frat. Ord. Prædic.

† Reg. Solit. xx. ap. Luc. Holst.

For of all prides, since Lucifer's attain,
The proudest swells a self-elected saint."

In fine, from the earliest ages of Christianity we find that the monastic examples in some respects were proposed to the world as profitable and conducive to its best interests. "These hermits," said St. Ephrem, "are on the summits of mountains as so many lighted beacons, in order to direct those who come to find them by the movement of piety."

We have not to search long for proof that this external action forms a real result of the monastic life. He must be a rebel twice to virtue that can live to be convinced of a dishonour near such an instructive goodness. The mere fact of the neighbourhood of such persons furnishes a lesson which is not wholly lost upon any class of the community, but their presence charms and inspires. Judith de Bellefond, Sister Anne Thérèse de St. Augustine in religion, describing the reverend mother of the Carmelites of Paris, says, "The greatest persons felt the majesty of her presence. I have seen Mdle de Bourbon kneel when speaking to her, and the queen of France standing like a nun before her abbess, not presuming to sit down till she had brought a chair for her. The queens of England and of Poland used also to visit her to ask her advice, and hear her speak of God. The late Queen Mary de Medicis used to pass many hours with her alone, treating about the most important affairs *."

"Chaster than crystal on the Scythian cliffs,
The more the proud winds court, the more the purer.
Sweeter in her obedience than a sacrifice ;
And in her mind a saint, that even yet living,
Produces miracles ; and women daily
With crooked and lame souls, creep to her goodness,
Which having touched at, they become examples."

In the common haunts of men, in the very street, when the hooded head approaches, persons most dissipated are heard to cry,

"Break off, break off ! I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground."

The visit to a monastery has often proved the source of great and permanent conversions. Take an instance from the archives of Monte Cassino. Here is a charter, dated April, 1113, beginning thus : "I, Robert, count of Lauretello, declare that having in the time of Lent, for the sake of prayer, come on a visit to the monastery of St. Benedict, which is on the Monte Cassino, where

the Lord Abbot Gerard now governs, and having entered the abbey, and being seized with wonder at the marvellous works, at the assembly of the monks, at their order and discipline, and also at their great charity, I was suddenly struck with compunction of heart by the divine clemency ; so, by the advice and exhortation of my barons who were with me, I resolved to commit myself to the prayers of the holy brethren, and to be inscribed in their society. Being led, therefore, by the said most reverend abbot into the chapter, we humbly made our demand to the holy congregation, which being graciously received and freely granted to myself and to my barons, according to the custom of the fraternity, we, in order to recompense such favour, in the presence of our barons and soldiers promise that henceforth we will always love and defend this sacred house against all its enemies ; and, moreover, we give and grant to it as follows *.” “ Oh ! if that Queen Saba,” says St. Bruno, “ had come to blessed Benedict and had heard his wisdom, or if she now could come to see his houses, his servants and his ministers, his sons and brethren, his tables and food ; how all things are ordered, how well disposed, how to all there is one heart and one soul, and how no one says that this is his, but all things are in common to them ; how all love each other, how all obey each other ; what love, what charity is amongst all—if, I say, that Queen Saba, so prudent, so wise, so religious, so devout to God, could see all this, truly she would lose all the former things in spirit, for she would receive the grace of the Holy Spirit †.” In point of fact, it is found that the neighbourhood of a monastery is ever spiritually and morally useful to those who are in the world. “ The Cœnobitic association once formed, exercises,” says a modern author, “ on all classes of society the most salutary influence. It forms them to virtue by its power of expansion ; it spreads far around it emanations of its life, that is to say, fruitful seeds of piety and morality, of liberty and charity ; while by its power of assimilation it attracts and incorporates all the given elements of affinity with itself ‡.” It is difficult even for the rich to resist wholly the influence of such houses, where men are observed to direct their thoughts and actions by the rule of reason, teaching them by their own example contempt of all inferior vanities, utter indifference for the pomps that attract the proud, for the

“ ——— Marble portal gilded o'er ;
Assyrian carpets ; chairs of ivory ;
The luxury of a stupendous house ;
Garments perfum'd ; gems valu'd not for use

* Hist. Cassinens. vii.

† Exposit. de Confessoribus.

‡ Dubois, Hist. de l'Abbaye de Morimond, 94.

But needless ornament ; a sumptuous table
And all the baits of sense."

Persons conversant with European proverbs, and the habits of thinking observable in our ancestors, need not be told how many curious instances of the monastic influence may be found in the household words and customs of the olden time. Thus, "He can hear *Tu autem*" used to be said to denote that a person was quick to understand a thing ; for it alludes to the monk who is attentive to the prior giving the signal in the refectory with these words, and to each of the community being ready at an instant to rise, replying, "*Domine, miserere nobis* *."

When St. Peter of Alcantara was in his hermitage at Coria, the count of Nieble, with his sons and all his family, came to live in the neighbouring village of the Holy Cross, in order that he might be near him, and have occasion to converse with him on things regarding his salvation. When in the hermitage of La Rabida, many persons came to the fearful desert for the same purpose. The marquis of Villanuova, in order to have the consolation of catching a glimpse at him, used to spend whole hours in the convent of our Lady of Hope, where he was remaining in retreat. Don Francis Monroy, count of Belvis, founder of the monastery of Belvis, used very often to come to it, in order to have the pleasure of speaking with him ; and he derived such benefit from his conversation that he began to lead a holy life, his wife following his example. The saint produced the same impression on his nephew, aged fourteen, son of the count of Oropese, who afterwards became perfectly attached to this servant of God. Wherever he found himself, the light of sanctity encompassed and inspired him, so as to excite the admiration of those who looked on. Thus, being constrained to dine with the count of Torreson, opening his eyes to bless the meats, and beholding the table so magnificently provided, he was suddenly raised to an ecstasy, in which he remained three hours. We are told that when at the court of Lisbon, he was so greatly honoured that he used to go into the streets and public places to occupy himself in some way that might appear derogatory to the gravity of his character. The secret of such actions was the depth of his conviction that honour is a burden, an intolerable burden, and that fatal to man is "the lust of display, the seeming that unmakes our being." They furnished a lesson, therefore, from which all men of every profession might derive profit. That he at least had need of standing on his guard against this canker, is evident from the honour with which the world treated him. Emperors and kings, and persons of the highest rank, had no less

* *Le Roux de Lincy, Le Livre des Proverbes Français.*

reverence for him than the populace. Crowds of gentlemen used to repair to his monastery for confession. Many nobles hired houses in Placentia in order to be near him. The counts of Oropesa and of Torreson used to spend whole weeks in the convent. Don Ferdinand Enriquez, uncle of the admiral of Castille, and Don Diego Saurez, came expressly from Madrid in order to see him, and were so impressed by his words that they wished to remain with him; but as he refused permission, they took a house near Pedrosa, where he then was. The Emperor Charles V. always received him with singular honour, and used to express publicly his reverence for him. The king of Portugal, who compelled him often to visit Lisbon, would have him to lodge in his palace, the Princess Mary and the Infant Don Lewis making themselves his penitents. At Madrid, the virtuous Princess Jane of Austria, sister of Philip II., then reigning, used to testify the profoundest reverence for him. "A great thing," says a modern author, "is a great book; but greater than all is the talk of a great man. There are men who utter words that make us think for ever, who condense in a sentence the secrets of life." Such was this friar. The count of Nieble, brother of the holy bishop of Coria, was another of his admirers, who took a house near Pedrosa in order to be near the convent where he resided. His nephew, Don Lewis Enriquez, used to follow him about wherever he went, on foot, in order to listen to his discourses. Don John Albarado, who at first used to ridicule his own sister for her piety, was so changed by his preaching that the saint had great difficulty in preventing him from becoming a monk. The Infant Don Lewis, son of Don Emmanuel, king of Portugal, wished to renounce the crown to embrace the order under him, and he could only be prevailed on to abandon his resolution by obtaining leave to retire to Salvaterra, in the diocese of Evora, where he built a convent for those barefooted friars with whom he used to join himself in all their offices of devotion. On the last day of Easter, according to the custom at Pedrosa, solemn mass was to be sung, and St. Peter of Alcantara having been desired to celebrate it, the crowd was so great that the church could not contain them, and mass was sung at a magnificent altar in the open air, in the midst of a plain. The whole multitude were in tears, when, lo! a furious storm gathered suddenly, and seemed to break over them; the lightning played around the altar, the thunder horribly groaned, the wind and rain, of which they heard the fearful sound on all sides, completed the horror of the moment; but no one left the spot, and not a drop fell upon it. The hollow murmur of the raging tempest, one gradual solitary gust, came upon the silence, and died off "as if the ebbing air had but one wave;" but while those tall oaks were bent close to them, the lights burned on the altar without

flickering. After mass the crowd pressed forward to kiss the saint's habit, and testified with acclamations their admiration and their wonder*.

If the life of one member of the monastic family could exercise such a widely extended moral action on society, we may fairly infer that the general result could not have been insignificant. For, after all, there was nothing singular or exceptional in this friar. One might cite examples without end. St. Gertrude, to quote another, had such grace of persuasion on her tongue that no one, we are assured, was so hard of heart as to be able to hear her without at least feeling the wish to be virtuous†. Many testified that a single word from her lips affected the hearts of those who heard her more than the long sermon of the greatest preacher. Frequently obstinate persons whom no one could humble were softened and converted by her conversation‡. There were few convents or monasteries in which some persons more or less resembling her in this respect were not found. Look back to the seventeenth century, and the Carmelites of Paris. Mother Martha of Jesus, who in the world had been Mdle Fors du Vigear, is thus described: "God had given her with many eminent qualities such an amiable manner that it was impossible to resist it." The superiress was that Mother Agnes, who could console the queen of England, counsel the Chancellor Le Tellier, enchant Madame de Sévigné, and inspire Bossuet with veneration. "So then we are never more to see," he writes, hearing of her death, "this dear mother; we are never more to hear from her lips those words which charity and sweetness, faith and prudence, always dictated." Mdle de Guise had offered 100,000 livres to have permission to enter this convent whenever she wished. Mother Agnes refused, saying that no money could repair a breach of the rule, and the number of visits it allowed to a stranger each month was limited. Nothing perhaps can yield a greater insight into the character of the action we are considering than the depositions made by several great ladies of the French court respecting the Mother Magdalen of St. Joseph, which M. Cousin has published from the archives of the convent. Thus the queen mother says, "She could not suffer any word opposed to charity, and she often recommended me to banish all backbiting from the court." The Princess de Condé says, "It was Mother Magdalen who first gave me the thoughts of eternity; for before knowing her I was very much devoted to the world. She used to speak very freely to me on subjects that she thought necessary, and I have observed her address the queen in the same man-

* Lib. ii. c. 14. † Insin. Div. Piet. seu Vita ejus, lib. i. 7.

‡ i. c. 13.

ner, so that no one could leave her without a stronger desire to serve God. She used to insinuate herself into minds with such a grace, that not only it was impossible to feel hurt at what she said, but one felt constrained to enter into her sentiments. When she heard any ladies remark that such and such a sermon was not fine, 'Holla!' she used to cry in her agreeable, pleasant way, 'En voyla plus que vous n'en faites; c'est la parole de Dieu.' What she spoke to me most upon was the proper use of afflictions, and how we should despise the things of this world. I remarked that she never uttered a word contrary to charity." Madame de Longueville says, "She used to speak to the queen and to the greatest ladies with a certain majesty and authority, and seem as if she had a right to teach them. It was always, however, with the greatest respect that she spoke, and nothing that she said could be taken ill. You might have thought that she had passed all her life at the court, she was so civil." In general she used to enter into other people's sentiments, opening her own heart to them, and by these means she opened their hearts to herself. As for me, I used to tell her my most secret thoughts; I used never to be tired listening to her, and her advice was always the best. It is incredible what pains she used to take to inspire me with affection for the Blessed Virgin; but her piety appeared in every thing, and her love of God was beyond all description. When I heard of her death, I wept for her as if she had been my own mother." The Duchesse d'Epemon says, "She made use of her intimacy with the queen to draw the ladies of the court to virtue and piety; in fact, she inspires us all with piety." The Duchesse de Lesdiguières says, "I used to think it the greatest happiness on earth to be in her company. And I have often heard how she used to exhort the princess, and also the duchesses of Longueville and of Aiguillon, to visit the prisons and hospitals, and to give to poor people, and assist them." Thus was the society of the world edified by the inhabitants of the cloister. The influence of the retreats, in fact, was so great that some secular courts adopted to a certain extent a mode of life that might be qualified as religious. Montluccon, in the epistle of dedication to Como III., grand duke of Tuscany, prefixed to his *Monumenta Italica*, compliments him on the distributions of his charity and the discipline that reigned in his palace. "*Hinc ille ædium tuarum ordo,*" he says to him, "*disciplinaque vivendi, quas ad cœnobiiis ejus piam rationem et normam instituit; ratus nihili esse has fluxas caducasque opes, fortunas, ditiones, nisi ad perennem illam felicitatem dirigantur.*" "In the second half of the seventeenth century," says the Duc de Noailles, "the monasteries, in which almost all families had relatives, even in those of the severest orders, were in constant relation with the

world. The laity, in its turn, made retreats in these monasteries; men used to purpose privacy till they had digested some sad thoughts, and reconciled passions that were at war within them. They had correspondents also in these houses; they received direction from them; there was a perpetual communication between the world and solitude, between the court and the cloister. In the midst of the world even persons practised in a high degree piety and good works, and those whom passions had for a while misled returned sooner or later to religious sentiments. Whatever might have been the dissipation of life, there was in souls a root of faith which shot forth and flourished again after having been dried up*. It is curious to remark, however, that all that action which St. Francis, as we have just seen, required from his friars on their journeys, exists by means of the same simplicity, more or less, wherever such men are met with even at the present day. Goethe's description, for instance, of the Capuchins at Realp, though written by a stranger, is full of charms. The discourse of the good superior on the subject of his preaching, and generally on the truth of the Catholic religion, cannot be read without interest. He spoke to this stranger in the inn on the rule of faith, on the error of making it founded on the private judgment and on the Scripture; he spoke on the stability, unity, and certainty of Catholicism, on the peace and happiness of all who receive it, and on their immortal hopes of meeting again in another world. "We listened to him attentively," says the philosopher, "and he seemed to be quite content with our way of receiving his instructions."

But we must not remain longer observing the external action of these religious persons. One secret to explain their influence consists, no doubt, in the fact that they frequently are endowed with those qualities which cannot be recognized without securing love for their possessors. Men talk of thoughts being hidden from the world. "Hide the sun and moon!" exclaims a great observer; "thought is all light, and publishes itself to the universe. It will speak, though you were dumb, by its own miraculous organ; it will flow out of your actions, your manners, and your face." We might say of each worthy wearer of the hood,

"If ever Heaven's high blessings met in one man,
And there erected to their holy uses
A sacred mind fit for their services,
Built of all polished honour, 'twas in him:
Misdoubt him not."

Their simplicity, too, must conciliate the favour of the low, as well as obtain the respect of the noblest intelligences; for, as

* Hist. de Mme de Maintenon.

the same author observes, "Nothing is more simple than greatness; indeed, to be simple is to be great." "My lord," says the Benedictin monk to Foscari, in Shirley's play of the Grateful Servant, "the truth is like your coat of arms, richest when plainest." Such is the monastic character, having nothing to correspond with the quarterings, differences, bends, and pretences of heraldic blazon. The study of men in a religious order seems to be life, not language; and if they have been practised in its sweet rules, their tongue has learned simplicity and truth. Those who knew them were not prone to suspect their intentions, even when circumstances seemed to justify fear. "No," says Juliet, before drinking the mysterious potion prepared for her by Friar Laurence,

"——— It is not what I dread—
For he hath still been tried a holy man.
I will not entertain so bad a thought."

And when the same friar, being interrogated at the tomb, and circumstantial evidence seeming to exist against him, explains the whole brief tragedy in those clear, brief words that are so characteristic of his order, the prince believes him, and only replies,

"We still have known thee for a holy man."

That is, for one whose dove-like simplicity, like that of Brother Leo, would have pleased the lover of innocence, St. Francis. Similarly of Father Remigius, a Capuchin friar at Munich in 1527, we are told that "he was most eminent for candour, innocence, and simplicity, doing nothing by dissimulation, but every thing in a frank, open manner, so that no one could resist the attraction of his discourse; that he used to speak to persons of every condition in the same affectionate, fraternal manner; and that in return he was loved by every human being*." Vasari, relating a circumstance that seemed hardly credible on the testimony of the Padre Guiseppe Mangioli, who had been twice general of his order, adds, "a holy person who would not for all that the world could offer assert a thing that was not entirely true." Such seems to be the type of the monk in the judgment of our old poets. "Here is a friar," says Lidian, in the *Lover's Progress*, "that came along with me. You shall hear his testimony. Look upon him! such holy men are authors of no fables; their lives and their opinions, like brightest, purest flames, still burn upwards." To the monk they would apply the sentence,

"Always truth was policy enough for him;
He was as true as truth's simplicity,
And simpler than the infancy of truth."

* Raderus, *Bavaria Sancta*, iv. 172.

One might repeat, in reference to him, what Bartello says :

“ There is not a greater friend to goodness,
To downright dealing, to faith, and true heart,
Within the Christian confines.”

In fact, the cloistral admonitions were ever directed against all indirect, crooked, and deceitful ways ; and accordingly your hooded man speaks like Aminta,

“ ——— O my best sir, take heed,
Take heed of lies ! Truth, though it trouble some minds,
Some wicked minds, that are both dark and dangerous,
Yet it preserves itself, comes off pure, innocent,
And, like the sun, though never so eclipsed,
Must break in glory.”

The old hermit of Bassano, on discovering the sanctity and merit of St. Ignatius of Loyola and his companions, whose zeal for others he did not at first understand, said that he had at length learned from heaven that the bark of a tree is very different from its sap ; but the truth is, that often even the exterior of these men speaks for them sufficiently. And we may observe accordingly that the ancient painters and writers represent the monastic countenance as something very different from what it is thought to be in times when it is drawn only from the report of enemies. Vasari, relating that Francesco Monsignori portrayed from the life many of the monks who were dwelling in an abbey where he was occupied in painting, adds, “ All these are heads of extraordinary beauty.” On looking at such figures, one is reminded of what Michel Agnolo said of a statue by Donato, that he had never seen a face looking more like that of a good man. Zurbaran, Murillo, and Le Sueur drew their monastic heads from life ; modern engravers, caricaturists, and novelists, from their imaginations. Persons who have embraced this state of life, without wanting in many instances even the beauty of form which is ascribed to Brother Angelo the Franciscan, generally wear to all observers the expression incompatible with ugliness, of being just, laborious, modest, gentle, kind, and charitable. Peter, abbot of St. Remy, writing to the monks of Grandmont, qualifies them as being eminently the just ; for he begins saying, “ Scio quia in concilio justorum et congregatione magna opera Domini ;” and of the same congregation an ancient inscription thus testifies :

“ Hic antiqua senum probitas, hic semina morum
Jactavit Stephani vita quæta pii.
Quem numerosa patrum cunctis ex partibus orbis,
Turba duces sequitur, numine tacta Dei.”

Charitable in every sense of the word monks and friars assuredly

prove themselves. Buechius, speaking of many prelates and cardinals who were, he says, "intending the destruction of our order," adds, "*quorum nomina taceo, quia recenter mortui sunt* *." Of toleration too, consequently, we find them eloquent, and sometimes, even in times deplorably deficient in that respect, successful advocates. The Franciscans in 1287 were distinguished by their charity to the Jews, who, it must be confessed, have in all ages shown themselves grateful to the religious orders that respected and protected them. An ancient author says, "Now it appeared how greatly the Minors were esteemed by the king and the peers of England, when, to the great wonder of the whole nation, they procured a revocation of the sentence solemnly passed upon the Jews. It is true," he adds, "their main argument to obtain a release from the execution of the law was a promise to endeavour to convert that people; as, in fact, the salvation of their precious souls was their motive in this request †." But it does not follow that this was exclusive of other reasons which we should now esteem more solid. They certainly believed that all constraint in matters of religion was both pernicious and absurd. Mathieu Paris, however, who mentions that on a former occasion the lot of the Jews in London, when led to prison, was deplored with dry eyes by their rivals, and that seventy-one were delivered out of prison and from death by the intercession of the Franciscans, is content with adding, "The friars, I believe, notwithstanding what the world says, were guided by the spirit of piety, because as long as man is a wayfarer and in the world he has his free will, and can be saved, and one ought to have hopes; while for the demons only we can neither hope nor pray ‡." "None of the so-called Spanish Protestants," says an English author, "have enumerated the propositions and sentiments that tolerance is a Christian duty, that honesty in matters of belief is of greater moment than the quality of the belief, and that speculative error can never be corrected by civil punishment, none of them," he says, "express these principles so clearly as the Benedictin Virues, in his treatise against the opinions of Luther and Melancthon §." If, in fact, instead of reading about them in prejudiced authors, a man will only sit at the side of monks, or take a walk with them through the woods, he will come to the stranger's conclusion, that no two spirits can be more opposed than theirs, and the violent, intolerant, vituperative mind of the Warburtonian school, in which genius and learning are associated with insolence, intolerance, and habitual contumely and outrage. They never attempt to advance the cause of religion by bois-

* Lib. Conform. 131.

† Collectanea Anglo-Minoritica, 99.

‡ Ad ann. 1256.

§ Stirling's Charles V.

terous glee, facetious scoffs, and personal antagonisms. They have no expressions of violence and contempt for their Christian and ecclesiastical contemporaries, no remarks characterized by intemperance, coarseness, and acrimony respecting those who are enemies to revelation. Whatever may be advanced by rash and misinformed writers, obstinate in repeating charges of which the falsehood has been demonstrated by history itself, violent measures, even in the worst times, and the spirit of persecution, were foreign to the monastic orders. There is no flame in them but what lights them to charity. Despotism and oppression were not their work, though it is supposed, from the fact of their being eminently Catholic, that they were hostile to the freedom which Protestantism professes to establish. But, as a penetrating observer professing the latter says, "what mistaken zeal to attempt to connect one religion with freedom, and another with slavery!"

It is admitted by our best historians that James II., in seeking to make himself absolute and independent of his parliament, had no intention to establish the Catholic religion, much less monasteries, being served, as Mr. Fox observes, by ministers, no one of whom had the slightest leaning towards either; and that it was against tyranny, and not against the ancient faith, that the nation rose. Notwithstanding the dissent of Sir James Mackintosh, this conclusion is very credible; at all events, it supposes wisdom in those to whom it is ascribed. For who laid the foundations of English liberty? What was the mixed religion of Switzerland? What has the Protestant religion, with its hatred of the religious orders, done for liberty in Denmark, in Sweden, throughout the north of Germany, and in Prussia? A celebrated statesman says that there is more serfdom in England now than at any time since the Conquest; that there are great bodies of the working classes of this country nearer the condition of brutes than they have been at any time since the Conquest. If, when seeking to revolutionize a state under the mask of preaching religious doctrines, or simply to introduce into a country that knows nothing of religious disputes the principle of each person renouncing authority, and inventing a religion for others, men be restrained by the civil power through political motives, Protestantism cries out persecution, and ascribes it to the monks, because they happen to be found in that country, and to the whole Catholic Church, because that government is Catholic; but surely, even in these cases, whatever may be the motives of that government, an equitable judge will not blame either the monks, who have never been consulted, or Catholicism, which may have been as little. There is nothing, at all events, on such occasions to justify a panegyric on those who cry the loudest; but the same observer may repeat the words of this author, and say,

"I am not forced to be silly because I esteem the Protestant religion, nor will I ever join in eulogiums on my faith which every man of common reading and common sense can so easily refute." But on all the ordinary occasions of life, whether great or little, we find that monks and friars are the advocates of mercy and forgiveness; and as contrasted with the violence of other men in times of lawless power, their conduct in this respect is often remarkable. An instance recorded of St. Peter of Alcantara may be cited in proof. When on his road from the convent of Avenas to Avila, being arrived at the hostel of the Pic, he was obliged to lie down on the ground through sickness and fatigue, and his companion forgot to tie up their ass, which strayed into the garden, and ate some herbs. The hostess perceiving it, fell into a paroxysm of fury, styling the friars vagabonds and robbers, and shaking the saint's mantle with such violence, that his head, which rested on it, fell on the stones, and the blood flowed from it. Humble silence, kneeling for pardon before her, and the sufferings of the venerable old man, only seemed to add to her rage. At this moment Don Francis de Guzman, a gentleman of Avila, happening to pass by, was filled with horror on seeing the saint, whom he recognized, in such a condition; and when he heard the cause of his wound explained, he became so indignant, that he resolved, in the fury of his passion, to burn the inn to the ground, and gave orders to his servants for that purpose; and "he would infallibly," says an ancient writer, "have done so, but for the entreaties of the saint, who persuaded him, on the contrary, to give money to the woman to indemnify her for the vegetables his ass had eaten*." The instance is trivial, but it no less shows the essential spirit of the monastic family.

To a recognition, also, of their justice and loyalty the monks during many ages owed much of their influence. Deception was not one of their arts. Lavalette, master of the knights of Malta, in their distress being obliged to coin base money of a fictitious value, placed on it the words "*Non aēs, sed fides.*" With all their predilection for the people, the religious orders are staunch friends of governments. Their aims are high and honest. The wrong that is done to majesty they mourn for; they love their rulers; it is their ambition to have them know themselves, and to that purpose they often run the hazard of a check; but, seeing them distressed, they forget past faults. When Richard I. was imprisoned, the Cistercian order by a voluntary decree gave all its wool, which constituted its whole revenue, for the king's ransom†. Being an apostolic life, every thing in the monastic state tends to nourish that loyalty inculcated by St.

* Liv. iv. c. 7.

† Mat. Paris, 1196.

Paul, in combination with a sense of justice. Legislators who have put down these orders, and who make laws to keep them down, talk much of their own loyalty. But mark what a keen and near observer says of them. "These men hanging about a court not only are deaf to the suggestions of mere justice, but they despise justice; they detest the word right; the only word which rouses them is peril; where they can oppress with impunity they oppress for ever, and call it loyalty and wisdom. God save the king! in these times too often means, God save my pension and my place! God give my sisters an allowance out of the privy purse! make me clerk of the crown! let me live upon the fruits of other men's industry!" It is not with such views that the monks sing "*Domine salvum fac regem.*"

Jocelin-de Brakelond mentions many instances of the monastic justice, firmness, and generosity. "After this," he says, "the Abbot Sampson and Robert de Scales came to an agreement concerning the moiety of the advowson of the church of Wetherden, and the same Robert acknowledged it to be the right of St. Edmund and the abbot. Thereupon the abbot, without any previous understanding taking place, and without any promise previously made, gave that moiety which belonged to him to Master Roger de Scales, brother of the same knight, upon this condition, that he should pay by the hand of our sacrist an annual pension of three marks to that master of the schools who should teach in the town of St. Edmund. This the abbot did, being induced thereto by motives of remarkable generosity; and as he had formerly purchased stone houses for the use of the schools, that the poor clerks should be free from house-rent, so now from thenceforth they became freed from all demand of monies which the master of the school of custom demanded for his teaching. However, by God's will, and during the abbot's life, the entire moiety of the aforesaid church, which was worth, as it is said, one hundred shillings, was appropriated to such purposes.

"In 1198, Adam de Cokefield dying, left for his heir a daughter of three months old; and the abbot gave the wardship, as belonging to his fee, to whom he would. Now King Richard, being solicited by some of his courtiers, anxiously sought for the ward and the child for the use of some one of his servants; at one time by letters, at another time by messengers. But the abbot answered, that he had given the ward away, and had confirmed his gift by his charter; and sending his own messenger to the king, he did all he could, '*prece et precio*,' to mitigate his wrath. And the king made answer that he would avenge himself upon that proud abbot who had thwarted him, was it not for reverence of St. Edmund, whom he feared. Therefore the messenger returning, the abbot very wisely passed over the

king's threats without notice, and said, 'Let the king send, if he will, and seize the ward; he has the strength and power of doing his will, indeed of taking away the whole abbey. I shall never be bent to his will in this matter, nor by me shall this ever be done. For the thing that is most to be apprehended is, lest such things by consequence be drawn to the prejudice of my successors. On this business, depend upon it, I will give the king no money. Let the Most High look to it. Whatever may befall, I will bear patiently with.' Now, therefore, many were saying and believing that the king was exasperated against the abbot, but lo! the king wrote quite in a friendly way to the abbot, and requested that he would give him some of his dogs. The abbot, not unmindful of that saying of the wise man,

'Munera (crede mihi) capiunt hominesque deosque:
Placatur donis Jupiter ipse datis,'

sent the dogs as the king requested, and moreover, sent some horses and other valuable gifts, which, when the king had graciously accepted, he in public most highly commended the honesty and fidelity of the abbot, and sent also to the abbot by his messengers a ring of great price, which our lord the Pope Innocent III. of his great grace had given him, to wit, being the very first gift that had been offered after his consecration. Also by his writ he rendered him many thanks for the presents he had sent him."

The old romances and dramas yield indirect evidence that "the lazy, ignorant monks" passed proverbially among the people for being the most generous and honourable of men. When the *Rogue Guinart* of Cervantes shows great kindness and generosity to the poor captured travellers, one of the gang says in his Catalan language, "This captain of ours is fitter for a friar than a felon." In the *Guardian*, by Massinger, when one robber proposes to be generous, his comrade says, "You are fitter far to be a churchman than to have command over good fellows." And in *Shirley's Royal Master*, Domitilla says, "If you be an enemy to all preferment, your best way is to turn friar;" to whom Bombo replies, "No, I find no such thing in my constitution. Every man is not bound to be religious." But perhaps the most remarkable of these testimonies is that of Ben Jonson, who, in the *Fall of Mortimer*, ascribes these words to his hero:

"—— Conscience! preaching friars may make
Their hollow pulpits, and the empty iles
Of churches ring with that round word; but we
That draw the subtile and more piercing air,
In that sublimed region of a court,
Know all is good we make so; and go on
Secured by the prosperity of our crimes."

But we ought to observe in a manner still more direct, and in accordance with modern views of utility, that the result of these institutions was to produce a race of not useless, but of serviceable men. "He that durst be idle, durst be ill too." There is London philosophy for you! But the saying contradicts no cloistral sentiment, and throws no discredit on the life of monks. "It is said," observes Strabo, "that there is a Persian poem in which 360 uses of the palm-tree are enumerated *." Perhaps it would not be difficult to prove that the monastic tree was capable of answering as many purposes. We have already noticed some of the spiritual and moral objects obtained by its means. We might go on to notice the services rendered by the monks in regard to art, which draws from Vasari, when writing the life of Fra Giovanni Agnolo, the following observation. "From the life of this father it has been shown," he says, "as is continually seen, that a truly good monk is useful to the world, not only in letters, in the education of youth, and in the councils of the Church, but also in the arts and other noble vocations, wherein they have no cause to be ashamed of comparison with others; and since it is thus, we may perhaps be suffered to declare that those who broadly affirm the contrary have done so unadvisedly, and that such opinion is maintained rather from anger, or from some private pique, than with any good reason, and from a love of truth. But may God forgive them for that error!" Without pretending, however, so much as to glance at all the purposes to which these institutions serve, let us proceed to remark a few instances of the utility of a positive and material kind which results from them.

"The modern majesty," says a great writer, "consists in work." Who does not feel this truth at the bottom of his soul? The stranger is tempted to step forth and offer with enthusiasm his testimony; swearing that he never felt more complimented in his life than once, when young, he was mistaken for a carpenter by one of the people, and asked with a tone of regard in what shop of the town he worked, when, to confess the fact, he had not the courage to set wholly right the friendly inquirer. But if this estimation of work, in the common, popular meaning of the word, be adopted, then we should not be so quick to condemn or despise the monks; for assuredly they aspired to no other kind of dignity. Even literally and in a material sense they were workmen—artisans, mechanics, labourers. "Tunc vere monachi sunt," says St. Benedict, "si labore manuum suarum vivunt†." But before coming to observe them thus occupied, let us recal to mind in how many ways they were employed in rendering services to humanity. In the first place, as we have seen, they often discharged the sacerdotal office,

* Lib. xvi. 14.

† Reg. c. 48.

which cannot be altogether, I suppose, excluded from those services which confer benefit upon society. St. Boniface IV. condemned those who would not suffer monks to administer the sacraments on the ground of their being dead to the world. St. Anthony, notwithstanding his love for solitude, used often to leave the desert and repair to cities in times of calamity, in order to encourage the Christians, and give them spiritual assistance, which is a benefit that is not wholly exclusive of material advantage. Eminently, too, it is the business of persons consecrated in these orders to console the afflicted; and the book of Raymond Lully, *de Consolatione Eremitica*, beginning "In a great wood," might enable us to dilate largely on that theme. How many wants in the world to be relieved! how many sorrows that need consolation! On all sides we hear complaints like those of the old Idyl—

Ἡνίδε, σιγᾷ μὲν πόντος, σιγῶντι δ' αἴται*

* Ἄ δ' ἐμὰ οὐ σιγᾷ στέρνων ἔντροσθεν ἀνία*.

But lo! to procure a remedy for these wants, to remove the cause of these sorrows, and to soothe this multitudinous suffering, the hooded man or woman comes on the visit of charity; for it is one of the chief employments of the family to which such persons belong to assist, encourage, and advise all who need help or counsel, to comfort all who are unhappy. Of all friends, a friend in need is most delightful; and the hooded visitor has the talent of being a friend in need. The monk or consecrated sister does not resemble old Mirabel, who says, "I love to be charitable to those that do not want it;" but, as the friar in the *Lover's Progress* says of himself, "they stand bound to comfort any man they find distressed;" and though the difference of religion may seem to exclude some from their defence, they reply that it is for all, and that the moral virtue which is general must know no limits. Truly theirs is virtue winged with brave action; and of them it may be said, that they draw near the nature and the essence of God by imitating his goodness. What Pericles affirmed of the Athenians would have singular truth if uttered by their lips in reference to themselves. For if not prevented by their modesty, they might always say, "As regards beneficence, we differ from the generality of men; for we make friends, not by receiving, but by conferring kindness†." To their active solicitude for the sick poor every one may remember the allusion in *Romeo and Juliet*, where the Friar John gives an account of his absence, saying, "Going to find a barefoot brother out, one of our order, to associate me, here in this city, visiting the sick, the searchers of the city detained us, suspecting that we were in a house where the infectious pestilence did reign." We are told that

* Theoc. iii.

† Thucyd. lib. ii.

of all the visitors to Tasso at Ferrara, the dearest perhaps to him was the tender and kind Father Angelo Grillo, the Benedictine and lyric poet of Brescia, who could only be separated from him during the night, and who used to say that such a prison was sweeter to him than liberty and all its pleasures. "It was a noble thought of a certain modern philosopher," says a great writer, "and one which gives a favourable idea of his system, to distinguish in what he called his Phalanx a class as the Sacred Band, by whom whatever duties were disagreable, and likely to be omitted, were to be assumed." This was precisely the office for which the monastic orders were designed. To console the miserable, and inspire them with courage, enabling them to assist themselves; to tend the sick, even when pestilence reigned; to go to Africa in search of the captives for the purpose of delivering them; to visit prisoners, and establish discipline among them; to study, to copy, to compose books on every important branch of knowledge, to supplicate day and night for the human race—such was their principal vocation. The humility of the cowl would not permit the lofty reply of Socrates, who, when asked by his judges, after his condemnation, what sentence he thought he deserved, said, "If I am to receive my deserts, I ought to have the highest honours paid to me, and be entertained at the public expense in the Prytaneum*;" but nothing forbids those who have seen what the religious orders can perform, and who have read their history without prejudice, to affirm that those who belonged to them deserve to live in the memory of mankind as the truest lovers of humanity, and in the greatest number of ways the most effective benefactors of the human race.

It will lead us over ground already trodden to observe the result, which consists in the assistances which these institutions yielded to the poor, and, in general, their noble and disinterested hospitality. Yet we must pause a moment to consider this proof of the goodness of the tree which Catholicism has planted.

The monastic views of doing good to our fellow-creatures, of acting like the Samaritan, of obeying the Christian law in regard to loving fraternity, are very unlike those generally adopted by the men who revile their memory. And here one might be tempted to make great advances towards all who desire a social progress; for if the suppression of monasteries had contributed to the welfare of the lower classes, it would require more courage than the stranger possesses to revive the office of their advocate. If the men who drove and still keep them away were such as constitute the world's joy, their face so manly as it had been made to govern, and yet they so sweetly tempered that each would make himself a natural fool to do a noble kindness for a

common person ; if they could not only pardon when they have a wrong, but love where they have received most injury, the work they set their hearts on in abolishing the religious state would seem perhaps even blessed. But how contrary is the fact ! Look at the condition of the lower orders under them, and mark the misery of the poor. See what sufferers are driven almost daily and nightly from the very thresholds that are prepared by the state for the relief of the unfortunate. Look at this woman—betrayed, deserted, and repulsed.

“ How rude are all we men
That take the name of civil to ourselves !
If she had set her foot upon an earth
Where people live that we call barbarous,
Though they had no house to bring her to,
They would have spoil'd the glory that the spring
Has deck'd the trees in, and with willing hands
Have torn their branches down ; and every man
Would have become a builder for her sake.”

What is done for her here ? Let the poet answer, singing to such few auditors as resemble himself the Bridge of Sighs,

“ One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death !

“ Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care ;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair !

“ Touch her not scornfully ;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly ;
Not of the stains of her ;
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

“ Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful :
Past all dishonour,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

“ Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers,
Oozing so clammyly.

“ Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb—
Her fair auburn tresses ;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home ?

"Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

"Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

"Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

"Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

"The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river;
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery
Swift to be hurl'd—
Any where, any where
Out of the world!

"In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it;—
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

"Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

"Perishing gloomily,
Spurr'd by contumely,

Cold inhumanity,
 Burning insanity,
 Into her rest.
 Cross her hands humbly,
 As if praying dumbly,
 Over her breast !

“ Owing her weakness,
 Her evil behaviour,
 And leaving, with meekness,
 Her sins to her Saviour ! ”

It may not become us to say to all the world what would have been thought of such a tragedy at the convent of the Minerva, or at the abbey of the Two Lovers, at Jumieges, or at Paraclete ; but perhaps we may be permitted to suggest, as an idea of our own, the probability that a contrast would exist in regard to the appreciation of such a tale between the religious orders and what is now termed the respectable classes of society, sufficient to justify any conclusion rather than such as would assimilate the former to a revolting image. It does seem allowable to infer, that where marriage portions are yearly multiplied for the daughters of the poor, where death for love was so solemnly commemorated, where Agnes Sorel had her quiet grave, and where one tomb enclosed the loving dust of Heloise and Abbeard, the sad tale would not have been met merely with taunts levelled at the poet, or with deeds to prompt any tongue to repeat the bitter cry of poor Laertes,

“ — I tell thee, churlish priest,
 A minist'ring angel shall my sister be
 When thou liest howling.”

When the friar in the Lover's Progress relates to Clara how Lidian had entered his solitary cell and penned a ditty, his long and last farewell to love, he adds, he did this “so feelingly, that I confess, however it stands not with my order to be taken with such poetical raptures, I was moved, and strangely, with it.” These old poets knew of what stuff the holy were composed. “God pardon sin !” is the exclamation that Shakspeare puts in the mouth of his friar, suspecting Romeo's virtue. But take a mere ordinary view of life. In what, when all is said and done, do the suppressors of monasteries make Christian charity consist ? In adding their names to a list of fashionable subscribers to some grand religious or humanitarian project which others, and perhaps hirelings, are to execute, while they themselves can never tell how men and women in obscure garrets contrive to pass the four seasons. Where is the decent struggler with poverty that they know intimately, and who loves them, present or absent ? At what poor broken table with coarse fare have they sat, welcomed and delighted, feeling the truth of what our old poet says, that

"Where affections are both host and guest,
They cannot meet unkindly?"

With what humble person have they taken a walk for pleasure?
Of what family among the common people do they know the
relationships, the occupations, the habits, the wants, the contriv-
ances to save appearances, as where the poet says,

"The pretty form to coarse materials lent,
The one poor robe through many fashions sent?"

What do they know or care about the number of its chairs, and
plates, and "china" cups—only unmatched remains—about the
number of things that have been pawned, or, as is so quaintly
said, "left at uncle's?" Their memories may be furnished, but
it will not be with an inventory of the few necessities left under
a poor person's roof—a list of the combs and towels in the
cupboard, of the utensils on the shelves, and of the frocks hung
against the wall. The joys and sorrows, the wishes by day and the
dreams by night, of those who live in garrets, courts, and alleys—
all this is to them an unknown world; and yet they have charity
the while, and every tender sentiment besides!

"— Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency;
Men who can hear the Decalogue, and feel
No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers.
But if the poor man ask, the abject poor
Go and demand of him, if there be here,
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul."

It is where the influence of such men is omnipotent that we hear
sung the poetry of Hood—

"Oh, men, with sisters dear!
Oh, men, with mothers and wives!

* * * * *
Work—work—work,
In the dull December light;
And work—work—work,
When the weather is warm and bright—
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
As if to show their sunny backs,
And twit me with the spring."

Where the religious orders exist, such tenderness and goodness
are evinced for all who suffer, that, in their judgment, the
Almighty Himself must have interfered to comfort them.
Felisarda, in Shirley's play of the Brothers, utters words that

may serve as prelude to the brief sketch which we would offer here of what is there seen; for, addressing one who has compassion on her sorrow, she says,

“ I shall forget all misery; for when
I look upon the world and race of men,
I find them proud, and all so unacquainted
With pity to such miserable things
As poverty hath made us, that I must
Conclude you sent from heaven.”

It is not merely a community of which a large portion of the revenue is judiciously administered in aiding the indigent; each member is actuated by a warm and expansive benevolence. “ The devout lay brother, John of Jesus, surnamed the Almoner, was so devoted to befriend the poor, that sometimes, when employed to beg for his convent of the Order of Mercy, he used to give to them all the bread he received. At first the superior reproved him for this conduct; but as nothing could induce him to change it, and when it became evident that he was moved by the Spirit of God to these extraordinary acts, he approved of them, and allowed him to give to the poor all he could scrape together*.” A remarkable instance of this inability to deny the poor is noticed by Valery, in his edition of the Benedictin Letters: “ When Dom Denis de Sainte-Marthe and Dom Bessin published the works of St. Gregory the Great, Clement XI., who ordered that the brief of thanks to the father general of the congregation of Saint-Maur should be drawn by the secretary appointed to address princes, sent with it several large gold medals, one of which was for Dom Sainte-Marthe. This medal,” says M. Valery, “ had a singular fate, perhaps unique; for the Benedictine, whose charity equalled his learning, being asked for alms one day by a poor man, having no money, gave him his medal.”

The monastic assistance has been stigmatized of late as a system degrading to the poor, and an evil in itself; but we shall see proof presently that such an opinion arises from a mistake as to facts; for that help consisted in the employment of the poor, in raising them to a condition of comfort, and then, when all that was done, in supplying with food and clothing those who were disabled by infirmities, and incapable of helping themselves. Is it not remarkable to hear an English statesman acknowledging that “ the people were better clothed, better lodged, and better fed before the War of the Roses than they are at this moment†?” The presence of monks seems to render it unnecessary for the state to give 700*l.* a year to an official for distributing soup to a

* Hist. de l'Ordre de la Mercy, 345.

† Sibyl.

famishing population, as some governments in recent times have felt themselves impelled to do, in spite of their philosophy ; and it dispenses even with the bounty of the charitable rich, who at present, in London, have happily judged it well to return to the monastic practice of feeding those who would otherwise starve, by establishing a soup dispensary. No one in the neighbourhood of a monastery is found destitute of necessary things. The monks distinguished three classes of poor—the vagantes, who wandered, whom in general they little esteemed ; the pauperes signati, who were attached to the monastery, and who, disabled by infirmities, wore a distinctive badge, who lived and died at the monastic gate ; and the concealed poor, the pauperes occulti, whom the monks secretly assisted, the abbey of Morimond counting about three hundred of all these poor *. What is there to reform in such a classification, or in the method pursued with regard to it ? But let us observe instances. The monks gave back not alone in the payment of labourers, but also in judiciously administered alms, what they took with that “dead hand” against which some governments, with perhaps too much precaution, legislate. In 1273 the abbot and monks of Monte Cassino proclaim in these terms their sense of this obligation : “As the sweetest voice of the judge who remunerates works of mercy entices the hearts of those breathing after beatitude, so also it terribly denounces those who neglect to assist the needy, declaring that the kingdom of God will be granted to the former, while the latter shall be driven accursed into eternal fire : therefore, we, Bernard, by the grace of God humble abbot, and the whole community of Monte Cassino, are moved to consider that while every Christian is bound to works of mercy, yet we more especially are under an obligation to practise them, being supported ourselves by the alms of the faithful and the provident care of our blessed founders ; so that we above all should fear to hear that voice of thunder, if we do not bear the burden of receiving guests which is imposed on us, who also see manifestly the supernal remuneration, since our monastery was raised to this greatness by dispensing what it had acquired, verifying the words ‘Date ac dabitur ;’ therefore, after mature deliberation, we provide a hospital from our means, in order that not alone in our monastery hospitality may be exercised, but also in our town of St. Germain, without the gate of St. Giles, where we have built a sumptuous house for ministering to the necessities of the poor †.” Blessed Berthold, abbot of Garsten, would never allow any thing to be stored up for future use. When he heard of the procurators of the house having reserved certain provisions

* Dubois, *Hist. de l'Abbaye de Mor.* 274.

† Gatt. *Hist. Cassinens.* viii. 500.

through fear of future want, he used to order whatever it was to be thrown into the river *. During a famine in 1304, William, abbot of Morimond, gave up three thousand head of cattle to feed the people †. The "stupid" friars of St. Yuste were not found deficient in customs of charity when the Emperor Charles V. came to live with them. Of wheat six hundred fanegas, or about one hundred and twenty quarters, in ordinary years, and in years of scarcity sometimes as much as fifteen hundred fanegas, or three hundred quarters, were distributed at the convent gate; large donations of bread, meat, oil, and a little money, were given publicly or in private at Easter, Christmas, and other festivals; and the sick poor in the village of Quacos were freely supplied with food, medicine, and advice ‡.

At the present day the Trappists every where by general consent are regarded as the fathers of the poor in the locality where their monastery stands. We read in monastic annals that sometimes even delicacies used to be distributed; the young used to have fruit given to them, adults the best provisions. Albert de Chranichborn, abbot of Porta in 1311, ordained that at All Souls every year a certain portion of white bread of the first quality should be given to all the poor, including the prisoners of the province §. The monastery supplied lodging and food for three days to all who required either. Morimond, for instance, was an asylum open to all travellers of all countries, who were received without money and without passports ||. When Goldsmith was travelling on the continent, without a penny in his pocket, he availed himself of the custom which prevailed in convents, where any poor wandering scholar, by taking part in the philosophical disputations which used to be held on certain days, could claim a gratuity in money, a dinner, and a bed for one night, being as sure of a reception in these learned houses, which was as free from humiliation, as in the cottages of the peasantry. "With the members of these establishments," said he, "I could converse on topics of literature, and then I always forgot the meanness of my circumstances." "But when he returned to England," says his biographer, "he felt all his loneliness and destitution. How was he to travel there? His purse was empty; his philosophy was no longer of any avail. There were no convents; and as to the learned and the clergy, not one of them would give a vagrant scholar a supper and a night's lodging for the best thesis that ever was argued ¶." By an easy transition we proceed, then, to an observation of the hospitality furnished by monasteries in conformity with the

* Raderus, *Bavaria Sancta*, iv. 68.

† Stirling's *Life of Charles V.*

‡ Dubois, *Hist. de Mor.* 57.

† Dubois.

§ Chronic. Portensis.

¶ W. Irving's *Goldsmith*, 38.

religious obligation imposed by Christianity. From the earliest times we find a sense of this duty actuating monks. So in the lives of the fathers we read, "When the servants of God perceived that any one came to them, immediately they ran to meet him, and receiving him as an angel of God, they washed his feet, invited him to prayer, placed a table, and fulfilled all the offices of charity according to the divine commands." Blessed Apollonius prescribed this to the brethren, saying, "Quasi Dominum suscipiamus advenientem;" for he added, "Hospes fui et suscepistis me." Accordingly we read, "On our approach, blessed Apollonius came forth to meet us, prostrated himself on the ground, and then, rising, saluted us with a kiss. Then, on entering the monastery, we were led to pray in the church as usual, after which he supplied us with all things needful for the refreshment of the body." Abbot Cassian said, "We came from Palestine to Egypt to a certain father, and when he showed us hospitality, we asked him why he did not observe his rule? and he replied, 'Fast is always with me, but I cannot keep you always with me; and fast is voluntary, but charity of ceaseless obligation *.'" The hospitable and holy reception of all strangers in monasteries recalls the ancient world, and strikes every one with an irresistible charm. Few can visit such a house without being struck with the kind and gracious reception that they meet with. The words, the looks, the turns given to every thing are friendly. "Hier ist ein junge Fremde," said one of the friars to another, after a few words of conversation with me at the gate, as he introduced me into the cloister at Sursee, when they proceeded to welcome me, not as a stranger whose unbidden presence was displeasing, but as a favoured friend. How often in recent times can such old men be observed leading through the inner doors of their convent some traveller whose looks, perhaps, betray his hatred of religion, yet still ushering him farther,

"With reconciling words and courteous mien,
Turning into sweet milk the sophist's spleen!"

In one very ancient rule there is a curious clause respecting a danger, which indicates the practice of an Homeric simplicity in receiving guests; for we read as follows: "The cells of strangers should be placed apart from the monastery, with beds ready, where unknown persons may sleep and lay down their sacks, in which no tools or utensils of the monastery should be left, lest perchance those who are thought spiritual guests may turn out to be thieves. Two brothers are to be deputed to watch them; they are to sleep in the same cell with them, so that if

* De Vit. SS. Patrum, c. 13.

one of the strangers should wish to go to the church in the night, another, through fatigue, be unwilling to rise, there should be a guardian to watch each of them, both him going through the obscure places of the monastery to the church, and him remaining in his bed. And the door of the cell should be locked from within, and the key hidden, so that he who wishes to leave it must rouse the guardians to have the doors opened, in order that by these means charity may be exercised, and the things of the monastery kept safe. Similarly during the day, if one of the guardians be occupied, the other must keep a watch over the strangers from afar*." The zeal, too, with which strangers were received had an Homeric, or rather Biblical character. Father James, of St. Martin, prior of the convent of Mercy at Barcelona, used to lie in wait for pilgrims in the street, like another Abraham, and introduce them into the convent, and exercise towards them all hospitality†. The monastery of Weingarten being destroyed by fire in 1196, the blessed Meingosus, the abbot, gave a memorable example of hospitality; for before he rebuilt the monks' cells, he constructed the hospice for the guests and for the poor, while he and the brethren dwelt in tents, living the more frugally, that they might be liberal to the poor strangers, in each of whom they received Christ‡. In some monasteries, as at the Hieronymite convent of Guadalupe, the refectory boards used to be spread sometimes as often as seven times a day for the guests of all ranks, who came in crowds to dine with St. Jerome. Hospitality was not to end even at the departure. Guests were to be given provisions for the road when they left the monastery—"ac proficiscentibus juxta posse cœnobii viaticum imponendum§." Travellers who lodged with St. Honorat in his monastery of Lerins felt as if arrived in their country and in their own house, such cordiality did they experience; and when they left it, they seemed to leave their home, their relations, and their friends. This is what St. Hilary says. A great number of strangers came to visit him; for no one passed without interrupting his voyage for that purpose, and he received those whom he had never before seen as if they were his ancient friends. When Mabillon travelled, he found these manners still flourishing. He spoke with delight of that frank and joyous cordiality which he experienced in the monasteries of Italy, though it is true, he adds, that in this respect they surpassed those of France. The monks of Pontigny have been charged with a breach of hospitality in requesting St. Thomas of Canterbury to depart,

* Regula Magistri, c. lxxix. ap. Luc. Holst.

† Hist. de l'Ordre de la Mercy, 314.

‡ Bueclinus, Chronolog. Constant.

§ Regula S. Fructuosi, c. x.

lest their brethren elsewhere should incur persecution on his account ; but Mathieu Paris gives rather a different version of the circumstance from that generally repeated, for he says only that Louis, king of France, came to Pontigny, and in order to shelter the Cistercian order from the king of England, took away Thomas with him to Sens, after the archbishop had received hospitality during two years from these monks*. At all events, it was in monasteries that the great archbishop met with the most gracious reception, as he testified in the affecting interview which he had with the abbot of St. Albans, only eight days before he suffered. On that occasion, turning to his clerks who attended him, " Look you what has happened, my friends," said he ; " this lord abbot, who has no obligations to me, has this day been more kind and more polite to me than all my brethren and all the bishops my suffragans." Sometimes particular nations regarded certain religious houses as in an especial manner their hospitium. The monastery of Latiniacus, in the diocese of Paris, was a public hospice for all Irishmen travelling in France†. Especial revenues were sometimes held for the purpose of entertaining strangers. In the abbey of Waltham, founded by Harold, the means of hospitality were copiously furnished ; and the dean had a larger share of provisions than the others, for this reason—" quia pluribus habebat benefacere quam simplex canonicus." The expenses incurred everywhere by this practice must have been considerable. The abbey of Monte Cassino having, as we have just seen, a great house in the town of St. Germain, which was kept open to all qualified persons passing, the cost of this hospitality amounted often to the sum of 3000 ducats per annum‡. Sometimes when there was any backwardness manifested in the exercise of hospitality, the monks themselves interfered to induce their superior to resume the ancient usages. Thus, at St. Edmundsbury, Hugh the abbot was remonstrated with ; for, says Jocelin of Brakelond, " on the third day after Master Dennis became cellarer, three knights with their esquires were received in the guest-house that they might there be refreshed, the abbot then being at home, and abiding in his inner chamber ; all which, when this magnanimous Achilles had heard, not willing to waver in his stewardship as the others had done, he rose up, and took the key of the cellary, and taking with him those knights to the abbot's hall, and approaching the abbot, said, ' My lord, thou well knowest that the rule of the abbey is, that knights and lay folks should be entertained in your hall, if the abbot be at home ; I am not desirous, nor indeed am I able to receive those guests it belongeth unto thee to enter-

* Ad ann. 1166.

† Yepes, Chron. Gen. ii. 232.

‡ Hist. Abb. Cassinens. 624.

tain ; else take back the keys of your cellary, and appoint some other cellarer at thy good pleasure.' The abbot hearing this, will he will he, entertained those knights, and ever afterwards entertained knights and lay folks according to ancient rule, and in the same way as now they are received when the abbot is at home. Once upon a time Hugh the abbot, wishing to reconcile matters with Master Sampson, appointed him his subsacrist ; and he, although often accused, yet was the oftener promoted from one office to another ; at one time he was appointed guest-master, at another time pittance-master, at another time third prior, and again subsacrist ; and many there were who then strove against him that afterwards flattered him. But he, not acting as the other officials did, never could be induced to turn flatterer ; whereupon the abbot said, that he had never before seen such a man as Sampson the subsacrist, whom he could in no wise bend to his will. The abbey being vacant, the prior above all things studied to keep peace in the convent, and to preserve the honour of the Church in entertaining guests, being desirous of irritating no one, of not provoking any body to anger, in fact, of keeping all persons and things in quietness, nevertheless winking at some acts in our officials which needed reformation."

Here we should observe, however, the peculiar character of the monastic hospitality, as employed in subserving to a desire of the moral improvement of those who are its objects. In very early times it would seem as if the guests were expected to imitate, at least by engaging in some useful employment, the example of their hosts. Thus, in an ancient rule we read, "When any brother or guest comes to the monastery, in consideration of the fatigue of his journey, he may remain without doing any thing for two days. After which interval he is to be told to labour either in the helds or at some art, or else to leave the monastery ; and if he consents he is to be set to work with the brethren, but if he declines he must depart ; and his bed is to be prepared for the next guest who may arrive. But spiritual guests, though they may not be able to labour on the very day of their arrival, will be sure on the following day, when they see the brethren working, to seek employment of their own accord—*ne non solum otiosi sed et miseri a laborantibus judicentur* *." At Monte Cassino certain monks were especially deputed to serve the guests in the hospitium, and excite and prepare them for confession and communion. The truth however is, that the place itself, as we before observed, conduced to produce these effects. The example, the chant, the discourse of the monks were all instrumental. When James II. visited La Trappe for the first time, he went to communion, and as he knelt

* Regula Magistri, c. lxxviii.

on the steps of the altar, the choir, as the office of the day required, sung the verse, "*Confundantur superbi, quia injuste iniquitatem fecerunt in me; ego autem exercebor in mandatis tuis.*" Every one present, we are told, was struck at the coincidence, seeing a king so humbled before the Divine Majesty *!

In some monasteries, by grant of the Holy See, especial privileges were administered in regard to pilgrims visiting them. Thus, the bull of Benedict IX. to the abbey of St. Victor, at Marseilles, speaks of the power of absolution there of old possessed, as justifying its designation of a second Rome. "Each penitent," it says, "coming to that abbey on foot, the doors shall be open to him, and then he being absolved,—*libere ad propria redeat letus; eo scilicet tenore, ut transacta peccata sacerdotibus confiteatur et de reliquo emendetur.*" This was the same indulgence as that of the jubilee, which remitted all canonical penalties." It supposed that the penitent should come on foot,—*qui tritis passibus venerit.* This is the oldest document of the kind existing, and this says expressly, that "it only confirms an ancient usage†." The monastic guests were expected to conduct themselves with charity and decorum while in the abbey; but, unfortunately, this was not always what they did, and Mathieu Paris relates instances. In general the monks expected that guests should not exact hospitality as a right. The archbishop of Canterbury, Boniface, was received in 1253 with great honours at St. Albans by the monks, after having written letters to ask for hospitality as charity; but at Belvoir, having neglected that preliminary, he was repulsed. Similarly, the Legate Otho always asked hospitality as a charity; but when Robert, bishop of Lincoln, at Hartford, refused to do so, he was rejected, which made him very angry; so that it was only by reason of the Legate Otho's intervention that he withdrew his censures. In 1252, Geoffroi de Lusignan, brother of the king, intending to lodge at St. Albans, sent his mareschal beforehand to announce his arrival. When this officer came to the gate of the court of the monastery, he cried out, without saluting the porter, "Here will come shortly my lord, who is not far off, and who is to lodge here. Where will he sleep?" "Where he likes," replied the porter. "It will be no where else then but in the palace, that you call the King's Hotel," rejoined the officer; "for he is of royal blood." "Be it so," said the porter; "only the custom with us is for all those who would lodge here to ask hospitality as a charity, and not imperiously to exact it; for this is a house of charity." But the mareschal, looking angrily at the porter, said, "What gammon are you prattling? Where are the stables for

* Hist. des Trappistes du Val Sainte-Marie.

† Monuments inédits sur l'Apost. de Sainte-Marie Magd. en Provence, tom. ii. 639.

the horses?" He was shown a vast lodge, capable of holding three hundred horses easily. Now, the same day there had come to St. Albans honourable men, religious and laics, whose horses were lying down after eating. The mareschal entering, burst into a fury at seeing them there, tore all the halters, and put the grooms to flight by high threats; nevertheless, the abbot was constrained to suffer all this under a tyrant king.

In 1256 another instance occurred; for when Prince Edward came to visit Earl Richard, his uncle, at Wallingford, his suite proceeded insolently to the neighbouring priory, and entered forcibly without asking hospitality. They plundered food, wood, provender, broke the doors, windows, stools, struck, reviled the servants of the monks as if they were vile slaves or robbers, filled every place, and left only the refectory to the monks. Such were the banditti that Edward kept for his courtiers and attendants*.

But let us return to those who had the grace to profit by the monks' hospitality. While they remained their language was expected to be gentle, charitable, and pacific. "Guests in the monastery," says the rule of Camaldoli, "are not to be permitted to speak evil against their neighbours †." It was expected, too, that they should conform to certain usages of the house. Dom Mabillon, on his journeys, when he had to sleep in a monastery, used to endeavour to arrive there before complin, in order not to cause trouble to the community. He had in view, probably, that silence after complin, when the doors are closed, and all things composed in their places for the night, when even strangers arriving are to be received with a tacit ministry ‡. To the latest times all the delicate and pious traditions of hospitality were preserved in the Benedictine monasteries. In the guest chambers were found books, a crucifix, an arm chair, also pen and ink and paper §. The greatest men were often deputed to wait on guests as of old. When St. Thomas of Aquin was at Bologna, a certain religious guest in the convent asked permission to go out and take with him the first friar he met. St. Thomas was the first whom he met, and not knowing him, he signified to him the prior's order. St. Thomas instantly obeyed, and when he could not walk as fast as the guest, this man reproved him; but hearing afterwards that it was St. Thomas, he made his apologies as well as he could, and implored forgiveness ||. We see therefore, again, from this point of view, how the visit to a monastery could hardly fail to produce deep impres-

* Mat. Paris. † Constitut. Erem. Camald. c. 53.

‡ Regula Magistri, c. xxx.

§ Règles de la Congregation de St. Maur.

|| Anton. d'Escobar, in Evang. Comment. vol. vii. 133.

sions. "We came," say John Bollandus, Henschenius, and Papebroch *, "to the abbey of Monte Cassino on the 16th of March, 1661, and we can truly say, '*sicut audivimus ita et vidimus in civitate Domini virtutum, in civitate Dei nostri et in monte sancto ejus.*'" "It is not for us," they add, "to describe the buildings, nor the admirable charity with which we were received, nor the splendour of virtues which appeared in these most devout monks." The learned Bacchini^{us}, in his dissertation on the origin of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, says to Dom Gattula, "under your guidance we visited the archives,—versabamur diu noctuque, manu, mente, sermonibus, cartas istas auro, longe gemmisque præciosiores, et inter ingentes earum acervos positi otio illi indulgebamus, quo a rerum omnium curis longe remoti, ea solida felicitate fruebamur, quæ sola in hac mortalium conditione veræ felicitatis nomen meretur †." The blessed brother Peter Nolasco, of the convent of the Order of Mercy in Tarragone, on arriving in that city a pilgrim from St. James, returning to his country, had been received charitably by the monks of the convent of St. Antonio without the walls, where hospitality was shown to all strangers, in which house he was so edified by all that he saw and heard, that he lost the remembrance of his dear country, the Tyrol, and resolved to remain there and demand the habit, which was accordingly granted to him ‡.

Ancient writers speak of the great spiritual profit which guests used to receive from visiting the monastery of St. Martin of Tours. "Thither hasten," they say, "kings and the princes of various nations, with their wives, impelled by holy vow? There flourish charity, the love of God, and the love of men, proceeding from a pure heart, and faith not feigned; there flourishes hospitality to the poor, to strangers, widows, and orphans, and especially to those of the household of faith; there flourish discipline, obedience, justice, silence, reading, meditation, and the service of God, day and night; there, too, abundance is found, because as our seniors deliver to us where first the kingdom of God is sought, all the rest will certainly be added §." Recently an Englishman who visited Spain with views far from prejudiced in favour of these institutions, describing his visit to the monastery of St. Yuste, laments that future travellers, in consequence of its menaced destruction, may not have the lot to be welcomed as he was there by those worthy men. "The day," he says, "was passed in sketching and sauntering about the ruined buildings and gardens with the good-natured brother-

* Tom. iii. Martii Act. S.S. † Hist. Abb. Cassinens. 767.

‡ Hist. de l'Ordre de la Mercy, 638.

§ De Gestis Episcop. Turonens.

hood; at night-fall supper was laid for the monks at a long board, but the prior and procurador had a small table set apart in an alcove, where, bidden to a spare but cheerful meal, I sat an honoured guest. As the windows were thrown open to admit the cool thyme-scented breeze, the eye in the clear evening swept over the boundless valley; and the nightingales sang sweetly in the neglected orange garden; and how often had Charles V. looked out on this self-same and unchanged scene! When supper was done, I shook hands all round with my kind hosts, and went to bed in the chamber where the emperor breathed his last. Long ere day-break next morning, I was awakened by a pale monk, and summoned to the early mass which the prior in his forethought had ordered. The chapel was imperfectly lighted, and the small congregation consisted of the monk, my sun-burnt muleteer, and a stray beggar, who, like myself, had been sheltered that night in the convent." Such were the impressions of a Protestant on visiting this abode, not of indolent, useless men, as some are resolved to represent the monastery, but a house eminently constituted to please and delight the most intelligent; not a proud and wretched habitation,

"Sed felix, simplexque domus, fraudumque malorum
Inscia, et hospitibus superis dignissima sedes *."

The names of guests preserved in the monasteries furnished often a curious document, of some historical interest. Before the disasters of '93, there was kept thus in the abbey of the Sainte-Baume in Provence, a register called the *Journalier*, in which were inscribed the names of distinguished persons who had visited it. There were inscribed those of popes Stephen IV. and John VIII., the former having come into France in 816, to crown Louis le Débonnaire, and the latter having visited Provence in 878. Mathieu Paris even, in his great chronicle of England, mentions the most remarkable of the guests who were received in his abbey from time to time. Thus, in a passage connected with an instance that betrays his credulity, he says, "In 1252, some Armenians, of whom one was brother of the holy man who died at St. Yves, came to St. Albans to pray. In fact, the holiness of their faces, the length of their beards, and the austerity of their manners, testified their sanctity. Now these Armenians, who seemed men worthy of credit, replied to all questions respecting the East which were addressed to them." Some of their replies, however, as he gives them, would be thought at present as stunning as their beards. But this allusion to the conversations of guests within the cloister, may lead us to reflect a moment upon the old romantic traditions which can often be heard related under such roofs. The early monks did not disdain

* Statius, *Sylv.* iii.

such memories. Some will have read with pleasure those conversations held in the desert, when the seven hermits, Peter, Stephen, John, George, Theodore, Felix, and Laurus, used to meet every Saturday at three o'clock in the afternoon, and after dining together on dates and olives, converse on various themes. Under the monastic roofs of the west are conversations without gall, without bitterness, denoting men formed by nature like doves, who will keep alive the flame of amity, where all discourse flows innocent, and each free jest is taken as it was meant. "At Alcobaga," says a traveller in Spain, "after supper when old convent tales went round, with legends of interposing angels, and anecdotes of friars long dead and gone, I retired to my cell through the never-ending galleries that echoed to my steps, and beneath the lamps that hung at great intervals, and dimly lit up those high and gloomy corridors." To look out from such casements at the night, and upon woods and mountains, after a storm, is not a bad termination of a day spent in visiting a monastery, or ill calculated to send us thoughtful and wondering to our beds.

"*Jamque fere medium stellata in veste tenebat
Humida nox cursum, et pluviae ventique quierant,
Nec sonitus nec murmur erat, ni fontium ab altis
Stillantum ripis, et moti leniter Austri.
Ipse procul somnos labenti flumine torrens
Conciliat, longeque canum latratibus arva
Responsant ; tacito dum curru argentea luna
Alta polo incedit per opaca silentia mundi *.*"

In the convent of the Dominicans at Bornhem, where that revered friend of the stranger who was mentioned before we set out upon these journeys, was receiving his education, there was an ancient raven kept, and it was so old that the most aged father of the house did not remember its first coming there. It would be well to hear the voice of that bird while these tales are being related, and moreover to have added all the circumstances of a fearful night. Let the wind be murmuring amongst old rooms ; let the swallow-nests, the guest of summer's masonry, falling with a startling noise from the windows, and the jutting frieze be giving warning of the dark and rainy season's return ; let the clouds scowl, make the moon dark, the stars extinct, the trees bending and groaning, the bells tolling, the owls shrieking, the toads croaking, the minutes jarring, and the clock striking twelve. The monk has read some aged stories worthy of a place in the book which has been lately published under the title of the Night-side of Nature. Yet it is not from the iron-bound clasped volume of Casarius

that I will draw an instance of the cloistral narrative. It is from the History of France, composed by one of the most sceptical writers of the present day. Louis d'Orleans, brother of Charles VI., in his thirty-sixth year, had a presentiment, says this historian, of his approaching end. It was at the close of autumn—at the first cold,—the leaves were fast falling. He had written a most Christian will, in which he ordained the payment of his debts, and left legacies to churches, colleges, hospitals, and to the poor. He left funds to construct a chapel in the churches of Saint Croix at Orleans, of Notre Dame de Chartres, of St. Eustache, and St. Paul, at Paris; besides he left foundations in each of the thirteen convents of the Celestins in France, in the habit of which order he desired to be buried. "Considering," he says, "the words of the prophet—*Ego sum vermis et non homo, opprobrium hominum et abjectio plebis*, I will and ordain that the remembrance of my face and hands be carved on my tomb in guise of death, and that my figure be clothed in the habit of the Celestins, having under its head, instead of a pillow, a rude stone like a rock, and at my feet, instead of lions, another rock; and I wish that my tomb should not be higher than three fingers from the ground, and that I should hold in my two hands a book, on which is inscribed, the *Quicumque vult salvus esse*, and round the tomb let the *Pater Ave* and *Credo* be inscribed." He used often to visit the Celestins in Paris. He loved that house. When he was a child his good lady governess used often to take him there to the offices; later he used to visit there the wise Philippe de Maizières, the old counsellor of Charles V., who had retired to it. He used even himself to reside occasionally in the convent, living with the monks, and assisting at their offices by night and day. Down to the revolution the cell in which he resided used to be shown. It was his custom to say his breviary daily. He gave to the monks the great illuminated bible on parchment which belonged to his father Charles V., and another in five volumes, from which they used ever after to read in the refectory. But now comes the awful part of his history; for, one night as he was proceeding to matins, and crossing the dormitory, he saw, or thought he saw, something which he took for Death. Such was the tradition of the monastery. The monks caused this vision to be painted in their chapel at the side of the altar. Death was represented with a scythe, and pointing with his finger, as if to call the attention of the duke, who was standing near him, to this legend—*Juvenes ac senes rapio*. This vision seemed confirmed by another. He thought himself before God, about to hear his judgment. It was a solemn warning that in the spot where he commenced his childhood, he should be warned of his end. The prior of the convent, to whom he confided the secret, believed, in fact,

that he ought to think of his soul, and prepare for death*. The duke certainly was troubled, thinking that these strange apparitions are for the most part fatal, as this one proved, for shortly after, as every one knows, he fell by assassins in the Rue Bar-bette. He was then interred in the chapel of the Celestins, which he had founded.

It is curious to find in a modern book, the *Diary* of a late Physician, an instance of warning by a vision, or an optical or spectral illusion, nearly similar, related by a philosopher as having happened to himself, and which was followed soon after by the death of which he had recognized it as a solemn premonition. I would only conclude that since such writers publish narratives of the kind in the nineteenth century, the monks may be excused for having in the middle ages simply related what was communicated to themselves. "But, good host, no more such terrible stories; your guest will not for a world lie alone to-night, lest he should have such strange dreams!" Though their marvellous had this advantage over ours that it did not turn any heads, in point of fact some of the monastic traditions are appalling; at least those that are concerned with love and sorrow are calculated to terrify all who are conscious of having broken any heart, and to revive the memory of that spectre which threatened the worldly-minded father of its former beloved one in those awful words—

"When thou art at the table, with thy friends,
Merry in heart, and filled with swelling wine,
I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
Invisible to all men but thyself,
And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear,
Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,
And stand as mute and pale as death itself."

Such collections as the *Magnum Speculum*, and the *Legends of Cæsarius*, are significant, at all events, as showing that the monks were not like these men immersed in business and pleasure, who forget how limited are our senses, how much may exist of which they can take no cognizance, and who are in haste to dispose of whatever they do not understand. Sometimes what the guest hears is only a dark allusion to some singular events of an inexplicable character which time has disguised and wrapped in obscurity, as having occurred either in the very monastery which he is visiting, or in other houses of the same order. Thus Antonio de Yepes says, "Throughout the whole world there is not another monastery besides *Junieges* which in one day enriched heaven with 450 holy confessors, all dying without any apparent cause of death †." Reader, you must take the record as I find

* Michelet, *Hist. de France*, tom iv.

† ii. 381.

it. At other times there is mention of strange events actually passing. The conversations at Pontigny must have been very interesting, at the time when the monks, in their letter to the pope respecting the miracles of St. Edmond, wrote in these terms: "The present miracles will produce faith in former miracles, and the expectation of future miracles will be strong and invincible. Now it seems that one ought to be more astonished at the concourse of people than at the miracles, unless one regards this very concourse as a miracle. For what is more miraculous, what more admirable, than to see the world to-day adoring him whom yesterday it detested; flying to-day to him whom it avoided yesterday; imploring to-day as a salutary patron for us with God him whose society it fled from yesterday, either through fear of the earthly power, or through the malice of its own heart? Lo! what appears to many sages as the greatest of greatest miracles *? Blessed Thomas," they continue, "has been to us a true prophet of what now happens; for at the epoch of his exile, having sojourned in our monastery by order of Pope Alexander, and having received a celestial warning to return to his church, and proceed to the Lord, gathering the palm of martyrdom, he had no means of recompensing us for the liberality of our predecessors, and fearing to be a burden to us, which, however, he was not, he promised that after him one of his successors would come here and acquit his obligations; which prediction we now see accomplished †."

At other times, no doubt, the rustic entertainment of the monks relishes of the curiousness of the court; for events and traits of manners connected with kings and men living in the world were often mentioned under their roofs, though cautiously, as if introduced with such words as "make fast the chamber-doors, stifle the key-hole and the crannies, we must discourse of secret matters." It must have been not a little amusing, for instance, to hear the monk of St. Albans relating in a whisper some of his royal anecdotes. "While Henry III.," he says, "was seeking with open mouth money in every way, it happened that, travelling near Huntingdon, about the feast of St. Hilary, he ordered the abbot of Ramsey to come to him, to whom he said in secret audience, 'My friend, I beg you earnestly to help me by granting me a hundred pounds, or at least by lending me that sum, for I want it greatly, and I must find it without delay.' The abbot, not being able honourably to make any other answer, said, 'Lately I gave you money willingly, but I never lent it, nor will I ever lend.' Then he applied to usurers, and at great interest borrowed the sum for this little king, who begged like a mendicant. About the same time the

* Mat. Paris, ad ann. 1244.

† Ann. 1244.

lord king fatigued the abbot of Bourg with similar prayers, assuring him that in affording him pecuniary aid he would give more meritorious alms than those which he distributed to the poor who came to beg at his gate. The abbot, excusing himself, was loaded with reproaches, and obliged to escape secretly from the king's house *."

But we must not linger here, though we could have maintained this theme for hours.

"The grey-ey'd morn smiles on the frowning night,
Checkering the eastern cloud with streaks of light,
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels
From forth day's pathway, made by Titan's wheels."

We must proceed forth into the adjoining woods and fields, in order to observe the monastic character on another side, for it still remains to remark the services conferred on society by these institutions, in regard to agricultural and other interests of a material order.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ROAD OF RETREAT (*terminated*).



VERY one knows that the monks were the first in the Christian world to propose agricultural labour as an employment fitting for free men. The ancient monastic rules imposed it as an obligation. "Non oderis laboriosa opera, et rusticationem ab Altissimo creatam, that we may abound in daily and necessary things by our own labours, and that we may with convenient mediocrity attend on those whom spiritual love invites to visit us, or assist those who are pressed by necessity †." In summer the monks were to labour till tierce, which interval in the autumn and winter was to be spent in study ‡. Though we live in an age of diggings, modern schools would disdain such occupations for highly educated men; and yet a distinguished advocate of progressive views says, "There is virtue yet in the hoe and the spade, for learned as well as for unlearned hands §." He might well say so, and perhaps modern literature itself can prove it;

* 1249.

† Reg. S. Isidore, 6.

‡ Regula SS. Pauli et Step. 1.

§ Emerson.

for probably it would be much healthier if poets and philosophers were accustomed at times to exchange their pens for such implements. "I am in my wits," says Franio, in the *Maid of the Mill*, "I am a labouring man, and we have seldom leisure to run mad; we have other business to employ our hands in; you are mad for nothing, and no man dare proclaim it; in you, wildness is a noble trick, and cherished in ye, and all men must love it." The neglect of agricultural occupations in religious communities was sometimes a subject of complaint; as when Jocelin of Brakelond, speaking of the abbot of St. Edmundsbury, Hughc, says, that during his rule, "good governance and religion waxed warm in the cloister, but out-door affairs were badly managed: but that when Sampson was elected there was a change for the better. In the first place, far from being inert, he commenced building barns and ox-stalls, above all things solicitous to dress the land for tillage, and watchful in preserving the woods, in respect whereof, either in giving or diminishing, he professed himself very chary. There was but one manor, and that was Thorpe, which by his charter he confirmed to one of English birth, a villan, in whose honesty he the rather trusted, as he was a good husbandman, and could not speak French." The building of bridges, the making of roads, and the drainage of marshes, were carried on by the monks. London itself had instances of the former, for Stowe says that in St. Olave's-street "there is Battaile-bridge, so called of Battaile-abbey, for that it standeth on the ground, and over a water-course (flowing out of Thames) pertaining to that abbey, and was, therefore, both built and repaired by the abbots of that house, as being hard adjoining to the abbot's lodging."

An eminent English statesman points to the fact that the monks in England were good landlords. "Their rents," he says, "were low; they granted leases; their tenants were men of spirit and property. The monks lived, received, and expended in common. The monastery was a proprietor that never died and never wasted. The farmer had a deathless landlord; not a harsh guardian, or a grinding mortgagee, or a dilatory master in chancery; all was certain. The manor had not to dread a change of lords, or the oaks to tremble at the axe of the squandering heir*." "With regard to agriculture," says Lord Carnarvon, judging from what he saw with his own eyes, "the existence of the wealthier convents in Spain and Portugal was a blessing; and their abolition is, I conceive, a positive evil to the state. The monks were often the only resident proprietors, and their beneficial influence was visible in the improvement of their estates, and in the increased comforts of the surrounding popu-

* Disraeli, *Sibyl*.

lation ; for they brought to the management of their properties great capital and great intelligence, and largely employed and liberally rewarded the industry of the labourer." Observations of this kind had been made in ancient times ; for hear what Peter the Venerable says, " Every body sees how secular masters rule over their peasants, servants, and hand-maids ; for they are not satisfied with their due service, but always unmercifully claim their persons with their property, and their property with their persons, spoiling them of their goods as often as they please ; oppressing them with innumerable claims of service, forcing many to leave their native soil, and fly to foreign parts. Now monks, though they may have such possessions, do not possess them in the same way ; for they employ only the lawful and due services of the peasants to procure the conveniencies of life. They harass them with no exactions ; they impose no intolerable burdens, and if they see them in want they maintain them at their own expense ; they have servants and hand-maids, not as servants and hand-maids, but as brothers and sisters*." It was well in general for peasants, when an abbot was their neighbour. John, abbot of Monte Cassino, grants the unlimited right of pasturage on the mountains by night and by day to the inhabitants of St. Pietro de Avellana, on condition of their giving yearly ten pounds of good wax to the abbey. The monastery of Stivagium, in the diocese of Toul, was so called from stiva, a plough-handle, because by the plough and agriculture it had enriched the neighbourhood †.

Minute sanitary laws, that would greatly edify us in England at the present day, emanated from such proprietors. Amongst the regulations given by Ignatius Squarcialupus, abbot of Monte Cassino, to the town of Citrarius, one is entitled, *De non projiciendo in viis publicis, seu vicinalibus sorditias et immunditias*. It is ordered—*quod nullus homo vel mulier dictæ terræ et habitantes in ea, possit ullo unquam tempore in stradis et locis publicis, fidum, sorditias, stercora, opa olivarum macinata, et alia quæ generant fetorem et aeris corruptionem projicere, seu projici facere ‡*." It is a curious fact that six centuries ago the Cistercian monks of Waverley Abbey abandoned the use of the river Wey, though flowing beneath their windows, and resorted to a distant hill for pure soft water, which they collected and conveyed to the abbey in subterranean pipes, closely resembling those laid down on Hungay Hill for the supply of Farnham, and recommended now for the supply of London. These ancient waterworks of Waverley were planned and executed by a monk of the abbey called Brother Simon. Fra Giocondo rendered such service to Venice by his works for the preservation of the

* Peter the Venerable, *Defence of Cluny*.

† *Servat. Index, Cœnob. Ord. Præmonst.*

‡ *Gattula, Hist. Abb. Cassin. 587.*

Lagoons, which were in danger of being choked, so as to render the air insalubrious, that Signor Luigi Cornaro said he should be called the second founder of that city. All works of this nature they used to designate as holy. It was the monks who, like this illustrious friar, constructed many of the old bridges, causeways, dikes, and embankments, so that their respective countries may be said to have eternal obligation to their memory.

It should not be forgotten that all kinds of industry were conducted by religious men. The best operatives, the most intelligent agriculturists of Europe, as well as some of the greatest artisans, have been monks. So early as in the ninth century the abbey of St. Germain formed one of the chief territorial properties in France, which was wholly agricultural. The monks of Tamié, in Savoy, had iron mines and manufactures which yielded an immense return. This monastery was celebrated for the security which it furnished to travellers, for its agricultural labours, and its charities to the poor*. All this agricultural organization, which certain modern reformers have attempted to establish in France at such a vast expense, and hitherto with so little fruit, had been realized by monks all over Europe more than six hundred years ago, only with this difference, that the monks did not demand twenty-five millions a year in order to make their experiments, but only some forests and marshes †. "We have read," says an historian of Morimond, "Varro and Columella on the manner of cultivating the ground with the Romans; Matthieu de Dombasle, Olivier de Serres, Moreau de Jonnés, and De Gasparin, in France, John Sinclair, in England, Ronconi, in Italy, Cotta, Burgsdoff, Kasthoffer, in Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium, have given us an idea of the progress of agricultural science in modern times. Well, after admiring the labours of these authors, we have studied the works of the first Cistercians, we have visited those executed by their successors at the present day, and we have been obliged to recognize that in whatever spots the monks have fixed their spades, are still to be found the Columns of Hercules, as far as farming is concerned ‡." The right of feeding herds in forests was generally bestowed on monasteries. These herds were numerous. In a single night, during the reign of Charlemagne, we read of one abbey losing a hundred oxen by a disease there prevalent §. In 1358, when the English pillaged the abbey of St. Eloi, near Noyon, they took from it 423 horses, more than 200 foals, 552 horned cattle, 8000 sheep, and 800 swine ||. Every where the

* Chevray, Vie de S. Pierre de Tarentaise, 242.

† Dubois, Hist. de l'Abbaye de Morimond, 217. ‡ Id. 226.

§ Le Président Fanchet Fleurs de la Maison de Charlemagne, 161.

|| Moët de la Forte-Maison, Antiquités de Noyon, 453.

Cistercians, whose riches consisted in wool, had vast flocks of sheep. Those of England depended much on Flanders for the sale of their wool*. The monastic barns still existing in many places can give an idea of the extent of agricultural produce belonging to these houses. The greatest men in cloisters did not disdain to be occupied with such interests. Dom Mabillon was *célérrier*, a sort of steward, at Corbie. Lanfranc one day returning from the monastery of Bec to a certain poor grange, rode with a cat in a bag behind him; a stranger who joined his company on the road, seeing something move in the bag, asked him what he carried, and he replied,—“*Mures et rati valde nobis sunt infesti, et ideo nunc affero eatum ad comprimendum furem illorum* †.” In consequence of their attention to agriculture, observations on the weather occupied the monks; and many curious deductions can be traced to them, as to men who wished to be useful: as old Homer would say,—

Τοῖς, οἳ νῦν γεγάσσι, καὶ οἳ μετόπισθεν ἔσονται ‡.

For their motive was not exactly that which makes, perhaps, so many of the respectable classes now take an interest in the weather at harvest time; as when we read under the date of July 29, “This day, in consequence of the late rains and the lowering aspect of the harvest, the Society of Friends mustered in great numbers at the Corn Exchange.” Observations of temperature were made five times a day at the convent *Degli Angeli*, in Florence, and in many monasteries of Italy and Germany. “In the middle ages,” says Humboldt, “much was enunciated concerning the connexion of natural phenomena, which has at a later period been confirmed by sure experience, and has since become matter of scientific knowledge §.” The falling stars of the tenth of August, as a recurring phenomenon, called the fiery tears of St. Laurence, as also the cold days of the saints Mamertus, Pancratius, and Servatius, had been observed by the monks. At Christ’s College, Cambridge, is a manuscript ascribed to a monk, and entitled “*Ephemerides Rerum Naturalium*,” in which the natural phenomena proper to each day of the year are indicated, such as the first blossoming of plants, the arrival of birds, &c. The tenth of August is marked by the word “*meteorodes*,” which first suggested to Dr. Thomas Forster his inquiry into the August phenomenon. The notices of the seasons that occur in the monastic chronicles, indicate with what care observations of this kind were made. Thus one grave writer, speaking of the year 1288, mentions that in “October, November, and

* Mat. Paris, ad ann. 1254.

‡ xxiv. 84.

† Vita Abb. Beccensium.

§ Cosmos, ii.

December the weather was as warm as in summer, so that the youth of Constance took the amusement of swimming in the lake and in the Rhine at Christmas, as if in July and August*." The historian monk of St. Albans relates in great detail the atmospheric phenomena of each year. Thus he describes the tempest in 1234, which began in Bedfordshire, and thence passed eastward over the Isle of Ely and Norfolk to the sea. Similarly he fails not to mention the torrents of rain in July, about St. Mary Magdalen, which carried away wooden bridges and granaries. He records that "during the night of St. Lambert, on a Sunday in 1251, the darkness was so thick, that it seemed as if you could touch it; while the rain fell in such abundance, that the cataracts of heaven seemed opened to overwhelm the earth. "On the octave of the Epiphany, the next year, the fury of the south-west wind raged," he says, "with unheard of violence. In the cemetery of the monastery of St. Albans three oaks, not one of which three men could encompass with their arms, were uprooted." "In 1256 the flood of Deucalion," he says, "seemed to return; for from the Assumption till the Purification the rains ceased not each day, so that all the roads became impassable and the fields barren." Again he says, "On the day of the Holy Innocents this year, 1257, a vast inundation covered the country, which resembled a sea. One river alone, in the north of England, carried away seven great bridges of wood and stone. Mills and houses were destroyed also; and that night the hail was mingled with the tempest amidst thunder and lightning, which," he adds, "was a sad prognostic, since in winter such phenomena are almost always followed by bad seasons†." The monks sometimes had more reasons even than those of an agricultural kind for remembering such visitations, as may be gathered from what this historian adds; for he proceeds to say, "At the Epiphany of our Lord, the king, never heeding the pluvial inundations, and the tempests of wind, and the impetuosity of the rivers, and all the troubles he was about to occasion, caused to be convoked the abbots of the Cistercian order to London, to receive his commands. So they came, for they could not help it, though strangely tormented and without hope of mercy; and, on arriving, they were required to give money‡." In 1254 he mentions an atmospheric phenomenon similar, in some respects, to what has lately puzzled the philosophers of Paris. "This year," he says, "on the Circumcision of our Lord, a wondrous ship appeared in the air about midnight. Some monks of St. Albans, who happened to be at St. Amphibale for the solemnity, having looked out at the stars, in order to

* Bucelinus, Chronolog. Constant.

† 1257.

‡ 1257.

see if it was the hour to sing matins, perceived this surprising light and form."

The monks were attentive, and not always unintelligent observers of natural phenomena connected with the soil of their respective localities. Humboldt speaks repeatedly of the services he reaped from the observations of Franciscans and Jesuits on the deserts of the New World. In 1691, we find Dom Mabillon acknowledging with gratitude the receipt of a dissertation on the diseases in fruits of the preceding year, which work was entitled "*De Constitutione anni 1690 ac de rurali Epidemia quæ Mutinensis agri, et vicinarum regionum colonos graviter afflixit,—dissertatio, ubi quoque rubiginis natura disquiritur, quæ fruges et fructus vitando aliquam caritatem annonæ intulit* *." The presence and escape of gases in marshes and mineral springs arrested the attention of Basilius Valentinus, an Erfurt Benedictine monk, at the close of the fifteenth century. So early as the end of the third century St. Patricius of Pertusa was led, by a consideration of the hot springs near Carthage, to form very correct views respecting these phenomena. Religion imposed no blindness with respect to any phenomena of either the ground or the heavens. Cardinal Nicholas de Cuss, almost a century before Copernicus, had reascribed to the earth both a rotation round its axis and a progressive movement round the sun; and, indeed, the example of Roger Bacon alone might prove that the cloistral influence has no inherent incompatibility with the cultivation of the natural sciences.

But we must return to our more immediate subject. The services of the monks, in regard to horticulture, deserve here a passing notice. Monastic gardens have been always celebrated. There, with men of elegant, pure, and aerial minds, who seemed the abstract of what is choicest in society, you might walk in groves, and orchards, and parterres; from the variety of curious flowers contemplate nature's workmanship and wonders; and then, for change—near to the murmur of some bubbling fountain, "that seems by some inexplicable association always to blend with, and never to disturb, our feelings, gay when we are joyful, and sad amid our sorrow"—you might hear discourses wise and charitable, enabling you to conceive in your imagination with what melodious harmony angels above sing their Maker's praises.

"How gaily murmur, and how sweetly taste,
The fountains reared for you amid the waste."

The poet alludes to the abbey of Einseidelin. "At Alcobaça," says Lord Carnarvon, "we found in the gardens of the abbey a

fine running stream, overhung with romantic willows. The monks were passing to and fro among their dependants, superintending their improvements. Happy themselves, they appeared to be communicating happiness to all around them, and exhibited a pleasing, and, I think, not wholly a delusive picture of monastic life." To the abbey gardens we can often apply the lines of the poet, describing the Villa Surrentina of Pollius :

“————— Vix ordine longo
Suffecere oculi, vix, dum per singula ducor,
Suffecere gradus, quæ rerum turba ! locine
Ingenium, an domini mirer prius * ?”

The monks studied horticulture from the beginning. “Whenever a colony set out from Morimond to form a new monastery, it used to take with it seeds and plants of all kinds for the gardens of the new house ; whence they passed to another, and so on to the extremities of Europe. The monks on their journeys, whenever they met with a new kind of fruit, plant, or culinary vegetable, used to carry it home with them ; and then, from the ground of the monastery, it used to be introduced into the gardens of the peasants and village near them ; and thus climates exchanged their productions by the intermedium of the monks.” In a manuscript of the monastery of St. Gall, of the ninth century, we find an abbot writing to one of his brethren, to pray that he will send him a certain kind of seed, which cannot be found “in tota Francia†.” At the present day, in England, these religious men are still at this work, sowing seeds which they have brought with them from the Continent, with a view to the introduction of some species hitherto unknown here. All the secret virtues of plants and simples, and in what degree they are useful to mankind, the monks could well discourse of ; but they were not superstitious, like the ancient naturalist, who, speaking of the anagallida, or corchoron, says, “Before sunrise, and before any thing else is spoken, three times salute this plant, and then gather it‡.” It is the honest herbalist protesting against popery who evinces credulity of this kind, as old Cole-pepper will bear willing evidence. But in the cultivation of plants and fruits the monks were indefatigable. Fra Giocondo, among his other attainments, was so skilful a gardener, that we read of his having astonished the French court, when he was in that kingdom, by the pear-trees which he reared in earthen vases. In places like the Isle of Thanet, where the chalk presents an obstacle to the cultivation of fruit trees, they had a

* Statius Sylv. lib. ii.

† Bib. de l'École des Chartes, iii. s. tom. iv. 466.

‡ Plin. N. II. xxv. 92.

plan of loosening it to a great depth below the roots, and placing a cement to prevent their contact with it, by means of which they succeeded in obtaining the best fruit; and to this process the gardeners of that part have been obliged to return. "In the early ages of our history," says a modern English writer, "the monks were the only gardeners. In 674 we have a description of the pleasant fruit-bearing close at Ely cultivated by the Abbot Brithnoth. The abbey garden still exists near most of our old ruined convents, where can be discovered at least the vestiges of the aged fruit trees—the venerable pears, the delicate little apples, and the black cherries, all of which the hooded man had planted. The chesnuts and walnuts have yielded to the axe, but the mulberry is often left, and even the strawberry and raspberry struggle among the ruins. The monks were men of peace; and their works show that they were improving the world, while the warriors were spending their lives to spoil it. The monastic orchards, it is said, were in their greatest perfection from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. The nonpareil apple, according to the old herbalists, was brought from France by a Jesuit in the time of Queen Mary. The Oslin pippin was introduced, it is said, by the monks of the abbey of Aberbrothwick. The fig-tree was brought into England, in 1525, by Cardinal Pole. In the time of William of Malmesbury, the culture of the vine in the vale of Gloucester was so advanced, that wine little inferior to that of France was made there in abundance. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries almost every monastery in England had its vineyard. These vineyards continued till the time of the Reformation, when the ecclesiastical gardens were either neglected or destroyed; and about this period ale, though long known in England, seems to have superseded, as a general beverage, the use of wine, which before had been largely imported."

But it is, above all, the woods that owe a debt of gratitude to the men who founded and administered monasteries. From earliest times the hermits and monks were friends and neighbours to the trees. Pliny, speaking of the Jewish Essenes, or hermits, styles them "*mira gens, socia palmarum* *." Dear to the Christian solitaries were the green cypress and the cedar, which cast so venerable a shade, keeping off at a distance other trees, and impressing the beholders with a feeling of almost religious solemnity. Needful to them, too, in the West, before the general use of pottery ware, was the maple-tree, of which they made their bowls and platters. Some trees derived even a name from the abbey near which they seemed to flourish best, and so the mahaleb is called the wood of St. Lucie, from being found

in greatest perfection near the abbey of St. Lucie, in the Vosges. For contemplative retreats the forest, in general, was required by the monastic life. The constitutions of the hermits of Camaldoli say, "Let our place be amongst woods, and those very thick; and let these be preserved and increased by planting—'Quam ob rem intra ambitum eremi non licebit ligna cedere, ne ejus pulchritudo deturpetur'—but those who without permission of the superior should cut down any green tree, must for each tree fast one day on bread and water: and if the prior should order a tree to be cut down without consent of the chapter of that hermitage, he shall be punished by the visitors*." In another place these fathers return to the subject, saying, "The woods must be so cut that they are rather preserved than injured by the cutting †." "It is not of small moment or utility to preserve the woods of our hermitages; and therefore much depends on the choice of the guardian, the 'sylvarum custos,' who is to have charge of them. He ought to be young and robust, so as to be able once or twice every day to go all through them, and drive out the flocks and herds, and animals of the neighbours. He is therefore to be an oblat, or a mere hired laic, without a religious habit. He must take care to thin parts, and to sow and plant others, according as the condition of the wood requires ‡." In loving the trees, it is true, the monks were not wholly singular. Herodotus describes the delight which Xerxes took in the great plane-tree in Lydia, on which he bestowed golden ornaments, appointing for it a sentinel in the person of one of the immortal "ten thousand." Pausanias is full of the praise of a grove belonging to the temple of Apollo, at Grynion in Æolis; and the grove of Colone is celebrated in the renowned chorus of Sophocles. But what distinguished the monks, in regard to the forest, was the intelligence and care which they employed in preserving it for their contemporaries and their posterity. "There are few great forests in La Bresse," says a French writer; "there are only those which have been preserved by the religious houses§." "Forests," says a recent historian, "owe much to the monks. It was they who undertook to drain the lower regions by means of trenches or canals; it was they who first opened large spaces within them to allow of free course to the winds, and who formed roads through them, and even ornamental avenues. The monks knew that some lands were destined by nature for forests, and that one could not attempt to cultivate them otherwise without violating providential laws. They knew that, on the one hand, the

* Constitut. Eremitarum S. Romualdi Ord. Camaldulensis, c. 1.

† c. 31.

‡ c. 32.

§ Varenne-Féuille, Mém. sur l'Administ. forestière.

lofty trees of forests appropriate to themselves humidity and aerial vapours, which they transmit to the earth by a multitude of conducting channels; and, on the other, that the rain-waters, being retained by their leaves, branches, high herbs, and under-wood, instead of falling rapidly, and by torrents inundating valleys, infiltrate slowly into the ground, and form under the trees those vast reservoirs which give rise to fountains and brooks. They knew that forest vegetation, acting on the oxygen of the air exercises the most salutary influence on electricity; so that forests, by causing an equilibrium, will prevent those great atmospheric revolutions which so often cause ruin. Before they touched a forest with the axe, the monks studied the question whether it ought to be preserved or not, and whether any thing could be expected from the soil if stripped of trees. The Vandals of the nineteenth century, after cutting down woods which the monks intended for preservation, have reaped nothing, after years of labour, but lichens, convolvuluses, and wild oats. The monks left forests on all mountains, to provide for sources of water and to prevent inundations; and, since their time, many brooks have been dried up and inundations have ravaged the plains. They sheltered the land by screens of high woods from the west and north-west winds, and left it exposed to the south. Since their time the soil has been rendered too cold for vines. They calculated the extent of forests required by the equilibrium of the elements, and the consequence was," adds this writer, "that storms of hail were almost unknown; for three hundred years no mention of them occurs in the region of Morimond; whereas, in 1828, when the monastic administration of property ceased, this meteorological phenomenon began to be developed with all its devastating violence. The monks established in their forests forges, glass manufactories, charcoal-pits, lime-kilns, and yards for timber for firing, for wheelwrights, and for building. They cultivated, moreover, especially the trees that were of greatest utility. The 'sylvæ cæduæ,' or copses, were cut every twenty-five or thirty years. The other parts of the forest were left standing, sometimes for two hundred and fifty years; these they called 'sylvæ glandariæ.' They had besides their venerable woods which were never cut. Hence the colossal trees which grew near monasteries called after monks, as the oaks of St. Bernard, of St. Stephen, of St. Alberic, and of St. Mary. When trees were to be felled in other parts, it was the monks themselves who laboured." In the sixteenth century we read of the lay brother Melchor de Yepes, of the convent of St. Yuste, having been crippled in felling a huge chesnut-tree in the forest, and of his becoming for the remainder of his days, in that house, a pattern of bed-ridden patience and piety. There were, then, the cutters, "incisores;"

the grubbers up of roots, "extirpatores;" the burners, "incensores," who set fire to disjointed trunks. "*Cumque tota die in hujusmodi exercitio laborarent,*" say the Cistercians, "*tam solis calore quam ignis ardore vehementer fatigati, atque instar fabrorum ferrariorum denigrati, circa horam novam prandendi causa domum repetebant* *."

The great writers on the forest literature of the present day are unanimous in acknowledging the services of the monks in respect to the interests on which they treat. "This forest of Seillon," says Varenne-Fénille, "which belonged to a monastery of Carthusians, was administered by the monks with great economy and wisdom. I have before my eyes," he says, "another beautiful forest that belonged to the Carthusians of Bourg. The process of thinning woods by cutting was forbidden by the king's ordinance of 1669; but these monks, who, by a particular exception in favour of their order had permission to disobey it, have always cut their high woods in this manner, merely thinning them to give room for the growth of the trees that were left. Now, I must add, that it is impossible, unless one wishes to destroy every thing, to deal otherwise with forests of resinous wood." The laws, in fact, generally protected monastic communities while administering their forests as they chose. Those of Malta provided expressly for the preservation of the forests belonging to the religious commanderies in the Austrian pays-bas and principality of Liege. Charles IX., during his stay at Arles, hearing that many captains charged with building ships had cut down trees in the forest of the Sainte-Baume, pretending authority to do so, declared by his letters-patent that their pretensions were contrary to the express prohibition of his predecessors, who wished that no one should dare to touch "a forest which served to the ornament of this holy place, to which such multitudes flocked from all sides through devotion;" and he ordered this renewed prohibition to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet †. The same writers, in recognizing the services of the monks acknowledge that other proprietors have not evinced either the same intelligence or equal solicitude in regard to the preservation of forests. "It is for the interest of consumers," says Cotta, "to suspend the cutting till the tree has attained to the age of 150 years; but it is only a corporation that will act according to this view. The monks study only general principles and great results. The mere forester, without genius, more timid, because the least omission can lead to great errors, follows a contrary method, and attends to details and to the least

* Annal. Cisterc. i. 96, ap. Dubois, Hist. de l'Abbaye de Morimond.

† Monuments sur l'Apostolat, de Ste. Marie Magd. en Provence.

particulars. Paris alone consumes more than a fourteenth part of the 655,000 acres of forest that are cut in France. It imports annually, besides charcoal, 300,000 loads of wood, of which eight come from one acre. The consumption of wood exceeds the reproduction. You say that the price of wood, nevertheless, has not increased these two years past. Yes; but by what means? By a fearful ravage which ruins all hopes for the future." He then proceeds to say that "forests, which are the property of private persons, perish; or when these proprietors learn to appreciate their own immediate interest, they are sure to perish*." "Few great proprietors," says Varenne-Fénille, "economize their woods, or seek to maintain them by replanting. Besides, egotism, which has made such progress in our time, causes them to refer all things to their men of business, who care less for the posterity of their patrons than the fathers themselves, and think it better to present a sum of money than a long register of expenses incurred. It was not so with religious houses. They managed their woods well. They sowed, they replanted, they thinned judiciously, and their woods are, consequently, the best preserved that we have in France. Forest science requires more varied, deep, and complicated knowledge than we think necessary at the present day†." With the destruction of monasteries, the ruin of forests has kept pace. The larch was once common on the Alpine mountains of Provence, but since the ruin of the religious houses they have been destroyed. Whole forests have been burned down in order to procure a few acres of pasture. The consequence has been, that the little soil which covered the rocks has been carried into the valleys by the torrents; and so Provence is stript of all shade, and now even of pasture‡. Dubois says, that "soon after the departure of the monks the revolutionists armed themselves with hatchets, and proceeded to cut down the lofty woods of Morimond. Ten years after the poor vine cultivators were obliged to take their hoes and pull up the vines, the soil having become too cold for their cultivation§."

But, perhaps, the interests of the forests have detained us too long. From the sum of all these observations it will not be difficult to estimate the accuracy of the ancient opinion that monasteries were institutions of great general utility to the countries in which they were placed, which is another point of view from which I think the truth of the religion which gave rise to them cannot but strike some who pass. I am aware that a distinguished, and in many respects truly admirable, writer, who

* Cotta, Principes fondamentaux de la Science forestière.

† Mém sur l'Administ. forestière.

‡ Id. ii. 8.

§ Hist. de l'Abbaye de Morimond, 436.

has only to wield his pen to make error with a stroke seem more plausible than truth, has thought fit to cite as similar instances of the unavoidable inferiority of past to present times, the two facts of there having been a period when the most powerful of human intellects were deluded by the gibberish of the astrologer, and when the most enlightened and virtuous statesmen thought it the first duty of a government to found monasteries; but though propositions of this kind, which have slipped from his pen, and which, perhaps, it is unfair to notice, may yield pleasure when brilliantly announced at the under-graduates' table, in a college dining-hall, where no young reason can answer such argument of fine imposture, couched in the witchcraft of persuasion, so that it fashions impossibilities, as if appearance could cozen truth itself, they will not quite satisfy men of experience and reflection who come from the vast field of observation presented by the world. "Antiquity," as some one says, "does not always turn out an old woman;" and in this instance no magic art can prevent them from perceiving that it is not as foolish a thing to prepare for others an asylum like a monastery, as to believe in the influence of the stars; that it is not an oriental, stationary, vague, and useless result which the history of such institutions presents, but that it is one of the most practical nature, exhibiting effects which, with certain modifications, are at all times, perhaps, equally desirable, and consequences which in every age alike must be regarded as of great, social, and political importance. St. Giles used to say that "the Order of St. Francis was sent by God into the world expressly for the sake of being useful to humanity—'*ad magnam hominum utilitatem.*'" Would it be too much to make the same assertion respecting the Benedictine and all the earlier orders? Was St. David the victim of as much absurd credulity as that of fond astrologers devoted to the art of *chrysopœia* or *spagyrica*, or the panphysic or panarchic knowledge, when he built so many religious houses; "in quibus," to use the historians words, "*discipuli a populari frequentia remoti, manum labore, lectione, oratione, et pauperum refectione vitam exigebant* *?" Was St. Bathilde no wiser than a doating wizard for thinking that she did all that was possible towards meeting the wants of every class of society when she founded and endowed monasteries, causing by such works to flourish industry at Moutier-la-Celle, the arts at Fontanelle, learning at Luxeuil, apostolic zeal at Corbie, and contemplation and peace in all the sanctuaries for innocence, exile, and fallen grandeur, which she provided at Logium, St. Fare, Jouarre, and Chelles? Was all this the same thing as if she had been casting nativities and turning over the twelve houses in the zodiac with

her almutens and alma-cantaras? The charter of Pandolf and his son Landolf, princes of the Langobards, to the abbey of Monte Cassino, sets forth that the Abbot Aligernus had prayed him, "ut pro amore Dei, nostræque patriæ salvacione concederemus atque confirmaremus cuncta qualiter hic inferius declaratur*," Is it so certain that he was mistaken in that appreciation of the probable consequences of such a gift, that for having entertained the idea he ought to be set down with the Faustus that pores over figures and cures by the ephemerides? It is not easy to discover how it should be so. On the contrary, that the founders of these houses were accomplishing a work such as the most enlightened lovers of their country would wish to perform in any age, is an opinion that a calm consideration of the effects resulting from them would perhaps fully justify. Are we to forget, if every other important result were to be overlooked, the immense utility of religious houses to meet the case of those men, who, as a modern author, not taking the existence of monasteries into account, says, "have brought themselves into such circumstances that, in relation to their social and secular interests, nothing whatever can be done for them? Men," he says, "who have possessed advantages, enjoyed opportunities, been again and again, perhaps, in positions where they might have done any thing,—such men making shipwreck of themselves, losing their character, estranging their friends, neglecting or prostituting their talents, standing at last debased by vice or branded by crime; devoid of credit, unworthy of confidence, shunned by their former associates, and willing themselves to hang the head and escape recognition,—what on earth can be done for them?—what can you say to them in relation to making the best of life or turning the world in any sense to account? Nothing. They had their chance and they lost it. They might have done well,—they did not. Then they cannot now. They must take the consequences of their folly, and just make up their minds to its irretrievable results. No one can help them. They are utterly ruined men so far as this world is concerned, and as such they must go to their graves. There is no possibility of reinstating them,—they cannot regain character or confidence. They can never more rise to respectability. They poured poison into the cup of life, and they must just go on drinking it to the last. Religion itself, in regard to this life, has no remedies,—it is all over with them. If they were now to have the piety of apostles and the faith of martyrs; if their inward spiritual being was to become as pure and beautiful as the most eminent saints that ever breathed, it would be of no use, or next to none. All that might very efficiently qualify them for heaven, but it would be incapable of restoring to them their lost and forfeited position

* D. Gattula, Hist. Abb. Cassin. P. i. 66.

on earth. The social and temporal consequences of their former course the ruined cannot escape. They must take them with all their aggravations, bear them without complaint, and bow down to them as an inevitable penalty. They could only be escaped by the intervention of a miracle, by the derangement of the order of the universe, the suspension of the laws, which alone make society possible or safe *." This is assuredly a remarkable observation when it is presented to the light resulting from the fact of monastic history, which presents so many instances of ruined persons becoming possessed of an essentially new character in the eyes of the world, of honours and happiness coming upon them as a sudden reprieve, return from afar, recovery, escape, restoration, health, peace, and life, after loathsome leprosy, prodigal wanderings, practical rebellion, prostrate debasement, blighted prospects, ruined fortunes, and anguish and wailing, and desperate sorrow. This consideration alone would be sufficient to prove that monastic institutions may be in the highest as well as in the lowest sense useful to humanity; and, certainly, after taking it into account it seems to many judicious persons impossible, with any degree of fairness, to deny or question the benefit resulting from them. Let no one blush, then, for these patrons of the monastery, who were proud of what they built up in it; nor can their election be disparaged, since they did not receive into their bosom and grace any glorious, lazy drones, grown fat with feeding on others' toil, but industrious bees that cropt the sweetest flowers, and every happy evening returned laden with wax and honey to their hive.

A recent traveller in Spain, describing the monastery of the Rio Batuecas, in Estremadura, says, "This convent, amidst the wonders of Alpine nature, with its gardens and its sixteen hermitages on picturesque eminences, was a refuge to travellers, a light of religion, and a centre of civilization in this benighted district. These Carmelites civilized the valley; they founded a school for the peasants, and a lodging for all wayfarers." In 1561, when it was proposed to demolish the convent of the Holy Trinity at Metz, in order to make way for some fortifications, the remonstrance of the cardinal, archbishop of Rheims, which was successful, the next year, in procuring for them another convent, called La Cour d'Orme, contained these words: "Unless we come to their assistance a great loss will result to the whole country; for if they are obliged to migrate to other lands, and desert this city through want of a house, the citizens and inhabitants of the territory will be deprived of their pious and frequent sermons to the people,—*ad populum*†." The monastery of St. Vedast being without the walls of the town, the citizens of Arras, we are told, felt that they would be more secure if it

* Binney.

† Baron, *Annales S. Ord. S. Trin.* 228.

stood within and in the midst of them; therefore they pulled down the old walls, and built others, which enclosed the monastery within the city *. The fact is, though we are perhaps retracing our steps to notice it, that the prayers, and even the presence, of the religious communities were deemed a protection to states, which is a benefit that even infidels must acknowledge, since whatever inspires a population with confidence in its strength, must be socially and politically useful. The council of Autun, by the mouth of St. Leger, declared that the monks conduce to the prosperity of the whole world, "*Et mundus omnis per eorum assiduas orationes malis carebit contagiis;*" and, notwithstanding the progress of knowledge, there will still be found many intelligent persons unwilling to concede that such services are wholly visionary. There are even still found persons to establish their residence near such men of prayer, for the same reason that led to the reconstruction of the city of Aix after the ravages of the Saracens in the eighth century. That city may be said to owe its existence at the present day to the oratory of St. Saviour, served by monks, in which it was believed that St. Maximin preached and St. Mary Magdalen prayed; for it was in consequence of the monks, drawn by love and respect for this holy place, having returned to it that the people again gathered round them, which led to the rebuilding of the city †.

But being now arrived nearly at the end of this road, it will be desirable, before taking leave of it, to pause at two signals pointing to the centre, which are formed by a consideration of the contrast between those who loved and those who detested these institutions. As was asked on The Road of Priests, in reference to the secular clergy,—who in the first place were their friends? Clearly in the foremost rank of those attached to them we must count the common people, the lower classes, the industrious classes; in fact, the majority of each nation. No institutions can ever be more popular than these. When overthrown by the violence of men invested with governmental power, it is the people who mourn for them. This was the case both in England and in every other country. In England the people rose in their favour. They struggled for a century, but they struggled against property, and they were beat. They well might struggle; for as long as the monks existed, the people, when aggrieved, had property on their side ‡. In Sweden the peasants cried out that "they would keep the monks and the monasteries, and that they would rather feed at their own cost than banish them." The knight of La Mancha saying emphati-

* Ant. de Yepes, Cron. Gen. ii. 403.

† Monuments sur l'Apost. de S. M. Magd. en Provence, 508.

‡ Sibyl.

cally, "I would not fail, though barefooted friars themselves should entreat me to the contrary," adopted only a popular way of expressing how much he loved them. When Paris, meeting Juliet going to confession to the cell of Friar Laurence, says to her,—

"Do not deny to him that you love me,"

she replies,—

"I will confess to you, that I love him."

The youth of both sexes loved the friar, and as in the song in Meister Karl's Sketch-book, would find a place for him among "the fellows" that they liked best. The monastery, as we observed in the beginning, is the favourite bourne of the common people's excursions. The pilgrims to Mount Serrat, which house contained a confessor for every language in Europe, used to be so numerous, that the historian of that abbey says, "No one, without having seen them, could believe it. 'They average,' he says, 'every day in the year from four to five hundred; but on festivals there are four or five thousand, to each of whom the abbey supplies lodging, bread, wine, salt, oil, vinegar, and fire *." "The people of Scandinavia," says Olaus Magnus, "flocked on pilgrimage, braving regions which no road traversed, and mountains covered with snow, and fearless of the tempests which raised the waters of the lakes, to arrive, after a journey of forty days, at the monastery of our Lady of Wadstena†." The people, the lower classes of society, every where regarded with horror any persecution of the religious orders. When the bodies of certain Portuguese monks, opposed to the government of Castille, who had been thrown into the Tagus in their habits, were taken out of the river by some fishermen, those good men in their simplicity deemed the river cursed, and refused to exercise their trade until the archbishop, condescending to their opinion, consented to take off the supposed interdict. The instance may be cited to show with what intense affection and reverence the religious were regarded by the hardy sons of industry.

In the Sarum office, the glory of the Benedictins of Canterbury, St. Thomas, is saluted as the object of the people's love—*plebis amor*. So might all the great luminaries of the cloister have been qualified. Could any one that loved their wholesome counsel but love the givers more? In the second place, no one can doubt but that it is persons eminent for virtue and wisdom who entertain this regard for the religious orders; as, in fact, it was nothing but a deep religious and moral sentiment which lay at the bottom of the popular opinion respecting them. Some men

* D. de Montegut, *Hist. de Mt. Ser.*

† De Moribus Septent. lib. xiii. c. 50.

affect to doubt the connexion between institutions of such a kind and true religion. But what can be more in accordance with natural piety, and with the Bible, too, than to show honour to those who consecrate their lives in an especial manner to the honour of their Creator, proving themselves his friends and worshippers by conferring benefits on mankind? "*Mihi autem nimis honorificati sunt amici tui Deus,*" said, quoting the very words of the Bible, the lover of these men and of these institutions. "I honour those," they add with Salvian, "who follow our Lord in sanctity and poverty; I honour them as imitators of Christ; I honour them as his images, as his members*." For fourteen centuries, at least, the monastery was protected by all the friends of Christianity, saying, "*Quoniam placuerunt servis tuis lapides ejus†.*" Who can describe with what reverence and tenderness such men founded and maintained these temples to purity and sweetness, making their hands the organs of a work that saints, they said, would smile to look on, and good angels clap their celestial wings to give it plaudits? What a demonstration was witnessed of religious regard when the first stone of such an edifice used to be laid! Truly this house which is about to be built must be very dear to men of good will, when the mere prospect of its being raised excites them to such fervour! All the brethren or sisters of every religious order existing in the neighbourhood walk in procession; all the children of the town, whose parents cannot be all blind to their own domestic interests, follow the cross, clad in white and crowned with flowers; a model of the future building is carried with them, and all the workmen who are to be employed in the construction follow with religious respect. Then, again, mark with what devotion the ancient monastery, when only seen from afar, is saluted by those religious travellers whose names are synonymous with enlightened Christianity! "The day of our arrival at Clairvaux," says Dom Ruinart, speaking of Mabillon, "he did nothing but recite hymns and canticles all the way. When, on emerging from the forest, we caught sight of the holy house, he alighted, prostrated himself on the ground, and then pursued the rest of the way on foot, continuing to pray in such a rapture that he took no notice of what I said to him; and so we arrived at the gate of the monastery."

That the successors of the Apostles should love those who adopted an apostolic life, seems as natural as that men of parliamentary creation should be attached to things of parliamentary origin; and accordingly, such in general, as appears from ecclesiastical history, was the fact. No instance, probably, can be discovered of a bishop eminent for sanctity, who was not also a

* Salv., *advers. Avaritiam.*

† Ps. cl.

distinguished friend to these institutions. The popes took the lead in showing regard for them. Innocent IV. had always six minor friars in his court, whose counsel he made use of. The favour of the holy see can be inferred from the innumerable privileges which it conferred on different religious houses. As a specimen of its language on these occasions, we may take the bull of Pope Urban V., granting indulgences to all who visited a certain monastery. It begins as follows: "Although He of whose gift it comes that he should be served by his faithful people worthily and laudably, gives out of the abundance of his piety, which exceeds the merits and vows of his supplicants, much greater things than they deserve, nevertheless, desiring to render that people acceptable to the Lord, we endeavour to win them by certain attractive gifts, videlicet, indulgences and remissions, that by means of them they may be made more apt for receiving Divine grace. Therefore, desiring that this hermitage on the lands of Mount Dragon may be devoutly frequented, and that the faithful of Christ may flow to the same, and receive, reflected back on themselves, the celestial grace from the mercy of Almighty God, to all who devoutly visit it on these certain festivals, being truly penitent and confessed, we grant as follows*." The holy see, in favouring the religious orders, had, in fact, always shown to the world that it had in view such large and generally religious and popular ends. It was, moreover, the desire of the popes, as Innocent III. expresses it to the monks of Monte Cassino, "*ne personæ sedentes ibidem secus pedes Domini cum Maria nocte ac die in lege Domini meditantæ a religionis suæ proposito revocentur—et eis pars optima quam elegerant auferantur.*" It is superfluous to cite other instances; but we may briefly observe how the example of the holy see in this respect was everywhere followed. William of Newbury speaks with pleasure of the manner in which the venerable Trustinus, archbishop of York, received to hospitality the holy Cistercian monks, who afterwards founded Fountain's Abbey, called—*Pontes ubi ex tunc et deinceps tanquam de fontibus Salvatoris tam multi hauserunt aquas salientes in vitam æternam.* "When our convent upon Mount Stromberg was erected, some persons of the province," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, "fearing to suffer a diminution of returns, complained to the Lord Philip, the archbishop, who made this holy answer, 'I wish that in every town of my diocese there were a convent of the just, who should praise God perpetually, and pray for me and those committed to me. I think that the state of my church would then be better, for these communities injure no one, but benefit many †.'" "My lord, why go away?" said the

* Hist. Abb. Cassinens. x. 613.

† iv. c. 64.

Prior of Soissy to St. Edmond, a short time before his death—"why leave us? You will have many troubles on your journey. Remain with us." And the archbishop replied, "My heart will remain with you." The prior did not understand the real meaning of the words till later, when there the holy bishop fell sick and died, and there his heart was buried*. In France, it was bishops themselves who founded many of the monasteries, so that all who respect the episcopal order must yield a share of their regard to those whom it so eminently loved†. "I find from your letter," says Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, writing to another bishop, "that you are displeased at our having called you a lover of the monastic life, which surprises me greatly. For the love of the religious orders would render you rather worthy than unworthy of the episcopal office, if there were no other impediment‡." The illustrious bishop of Coria, Don Diego Enriquez d'Almanza, who gave all the revenues of his see to the poor, and regulated his household as if his palace were a convent, and his domestics monks, made St. Peter of Alcantara his confessor, and showed, on every occasion, what a deep interest he felt in the propagation of his order. St. Thomas of Canterbury, whether wearing the white habit with the Cistercians of Pontigny, or the black Benedictine habit, as archbishop of Canterbury, was at all times the friend of the religious orders§. Lanfranc, archbishop of the same see, on coming into the valley of Bec, and descending the hill from which he saw the monastery, took the ring from off his finger, and did not replace it while he remained at Bec, excepting when saying mass||. But let us observe how distinguished men among the laity who were as religious as they were heroically great and intelligent in the estimation of their contemporaries, loved the religious orders, which, in seeking favour, were never known to borrow of vice or vile hypocrisy their indirect, crooked, and abject means. It is not to be pretended that monks were insensible, ungrateful men, who minded a courtesy no more than old London Bridge what arch was mended last; but it should be observed that they were no sycophants, no fawners on the nobility; they rather acted like the Florentine painter, Jacopo da Pontormo, who would sometimes do nothing for gentlemen offering him great remuneration while he was working for plebeians, and receiving only the vilest price for his labour—who on one occasion refused the magnificent Ottaviano de Medici, because he was serving his friend the common mason, Rossino. If the monks were liked and enriched, they used no

* Mat. Paris, ad ann. 1240.

† L'Ausmosne Eccles. p. 769.

‡ Fulberti Carnotensis Epist.

§ Ypes, i. 424.

|| Vita Abb. Beccensium.

witchcraft like the man of law, whose honeyed hopes draw credulous clients to swarm to him, as bees led by tinkling basins from their own hive to work the wax in his; they were no such magicians; they were no promoting knaves, to creep into the presence of great men, and under colour of their friendships, to effect such wonders in the world that babes would curse them that were yet unborn. When Fray Antonio de Villacastin, of the convent of La Sisle, near Toledo, was occupied as master of the works at the Escorial, where, for forty years, he superintended the execution of every detail of the mighty fabric, from the hewing of the granite by Biscayan masons to the paintings of the frescoes on wall or dome by Cambiaso or Tibaldi, such were his retiring habits, that he used always to avoid meeting Philip II.,—retreating at his approach; and it is said that he was caught in the end only by a stratagem, the king following him along the top of an unfinished wall, which afforded no way of evasion. "This servant of God," says the Princess de Condé, speaking of Mother Magdalen de St. Joseph, of the Carmelites, "took pains, it is true, to be on the best terms with their majesties, but it was in order to have opportunity of leading them to God and virtue, and not with a view to any private interest, which was the farthest of all things from her." Among the best of all the world themselves, whose only aims were virtue, those who befriended them were actuated by the same desire, or, at least, wished at the time to be so actuated, which was much; and if some who loved them had only this wish, and were for a while the sport of passions, we should neither suspect their sincerity nor depreciate the utility of the principles which bound them to such institutions; for, as a late writer says, "these persons were very sincere in expressing the sentiments of their heart, though they had not strength to follow them; and these noble sentiments had this immense advantage, that they mixed with their faults certain redeeming qualities, which preserved them from sinking lower, and that they almost always finished by triumphing, and leading them back to virtue." In general, however, all who are conversant with history, unless such sophists as would deny goodness itself, will acknowledge that the religious houses had the best and most just persons of their times for friends and well-wishers. To this fact even the old minstrelsy of Europe bears witness. In the Spanish romance of the Tax of the Five Maravedis, beginning "En Burgos esta el buen rey," the first words furnish an instance, describing the great king who conquered at the Navas de Tolosa: for "the good king," it says, "Don Alphonso the Desired, the eighth of that name in Castille, was at Burgos. He went about gazing on the Huelgas, that honoured monastery, and he looked at it on all

sides, because it was he who had founded it." So again, in another of these pieces, beginning

"Hablando estaba en el claustro
De San Pedro de Cardena,"

it is in the cloisters of St. Peter of Cardena that the King Don Alphonso is described conversing with the Cid after mass, and speaking of restoring their unfortunate country, that had been lost by the sins of Rodrigo. The abbey, according to these popular bards, was thus the chosen rendezvous of the best and most heroic men. Cautious historians lead us to conclude that the more public men thought of their conscience, the more were they drawn in affection towards monasteries; as in the instance of Henry IV., when, as Pierre Mathieu says, "the king becoming more thoughtful in regard to his conduct, began to haunt the cloisters of monks of strict observance, and to be found oftener there than in the Louvre *." It was even believed, from an observation of facts, that Heaven must have granted the privilege to St. Francis that whoever sincerely loved his order would be sure to come to a true knowledge of himself sooner or later, and to die the death of the just. However great a sinner one might have been, there seemed to be a certainty of ultimate conversion when that regard had existed †. Religious kings sought, as a great privilege, to have permission to retain monks near them. In 1441 Eugene IV. granted to Henry VI. of England, and to several other devout princes at their request, to have some of the Franciscans to reside constantly about their royal courts ‡. When St. Amedée de Hauteville removed from Bonnevaux, in order to found another monastery in the valley of Mazan, the gentlemen of the country offered, with a zeal that evinced their love for such institutions, their services to assist him. One gave him a wood, another pasture-lands, another ground for a farm, another built the dormitory, another the refectory, another the church §. Alphonso V., king of Arragon, laid the foundations even within the enclosures of his palace at Barcelona of a magnificent monastery for Celestin monks, and endowed them richly, "in order that they might not be distracted by seeking means for their support." In fact, the very charters of founders and benefactors generally allege for motive this desire of facilitating the exercise of a religious life, which shows what such persons had really at heart in befriending the monks. On the top of a beautiful mountain near the rock of Mondragon, and close to a perpetual spring of gushing water,

* Hist. de Hen. IV.

† Speculum, Vit. S. F. c. 108.

‡ Collect. Anglo-Min. 199.

§ Hist. de plusieurs Saints des Maisons de Tonnerre et de Clermont.

called St. Anna de Aquisvivis, a hermit lived, named Benedict Sarzanensis, having obtained a grant from the Queen Sancia of Sicily. Here he rebuilt the church of St. Anne, and added to it some cells for his companions. In 1325 a diploma from Agnes, duchess of Dyrrachium, cites the words of that royal decree: "We notify to all seeing these present letters, that Brother Benvenuto de Sarzana, hermit, has related to us how he, having left worldly snares, has rebuilt, in a certain sterile, desert place, on the top of a mountain of our land called the Mount Dragon, a little church to the praise of the divine name, under the title of St. Anne, and some little cells adjacent; and that, on account of the remote distance of the place from men from whom he must beg support for his life and that of his brethren, he cannot be as assiduous in his especial vocation as he had proposed, or devote himself to divine contemplation; therefore, in a devout spirit, he has humbly petitioned our serenity that a small portion of barren, untitled land may be assigned to him for cultivation, which he may reclaim. We, being unwilling that the said hermit should be hindered from his pious undertaking, grant to him twelve measures of one hundred and twenty square feet each of the same barren land for his use, and that of all future brethren *."

These men of retreat, who, as the Franciscans say, are chiefly to be found "in churches, in their cells, in their libraries, in the works of obedience, in the exercise of charity, in themselves, and in God," were considered by kings and people in former times as persons not unworthy of receiving distinguished favours; and it was nobly thought so, for princes never more make known their wisdom than when they cherish goodness where they find it. Accordingly, these religious persons being pure and tried gold, many stamps of grace, to make them current to the world, the ancient governments were pleased to give them. Some of these privileges were singular. For instance, France and Spain had such confidence in the probity of monks, that they were admitted to give evidence in their own causes. The general of the Dominicans had the rank of a grandee of Spain, and the privilege of remaining covered while speaking to the king. In London, in those ages, when, if a treatise of aldermanity had been truly written, it would have been found not to differ in any instance from urbanity or humanity, the religious orders were encompassed with tokens of the esteem of their fellow-citizens. The prior of the Holy Trinity, called Christ's Church, within Aldgate, founded by Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I., so far from being deemed an exotic, was an alderman of London, of Portsoken ward. Stowe says, "These priors have sitten and ridden amongst the aldermen of London, in livery

like unto them, saving that his habit was in shape of a spiritual person, as I myself have seen in my childhood; at which time the prior kept a most bountiful house of meat and drink, both for rich and poor, as well within the house as at the gates, to all comers, according to their estates." Old writers, speaking of the increase of this priory in 1115, say that "all the city was delighted in beholding these brethren praising God day and night;" and that certain burgesses, coming together into the chapter-house, gave to them much ground in the city. Very significant is the manner in which the London citizens, and the great nobility wishing to please them, used to come forward to build convents for any new order of religious persons that came to the capital. Thus, to raise the church for the Franciscan friars, the countess of Pembroke gave seventy pounds; Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, bestowed twenty great beams out of his forest of Tunbridge, and twenty pounds sterling; Lady Helianor le Spencer, Lady Elizabeth de Burgh, sister to Gilbert de Clare, gave sums of money; and so did divers citizens; as Arnald de Tolineu, one hundred pounds; Robert, Baron Lisle, who became a friar there, three hundred pounds; Bartholomew de Almaigne, fifty pounds. Also Philippa, queen, wife to Edward III., gave sixty-two pounds; Isabell, queen, mother to Edward III., gave threescore and ten pounds. And so the work was done within the space of twenty-one years. The social position of the great abbots was every where an index of the veneration and love with which, at least at some period or other, their respective countries regarded them. That position in one instance was so important, that we read "it was not considered safe for the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk that the abbot of St. Edmundsbury and the bishop of Norwich should both be away at the same time*." The abbess of Huelgas, within the precincts of Burgos, containing 150 nuns of the noblest families in Castille, who had jurisdiction over fourteen capital towns and more than fifty smaller places, was accounted inferior to the queen only in dignity. But there was hardly any monastery that did not possess some token of the esteem of its country, either in former or present times. Those who asked contributions for Montserrat had the privilege of exemption from all toll. The abbot of Battle had a privilege granted by William the Conqueror to pardon any condemned criminal whom he should pass or meet going to execution. The Count Garcia Ferdinandez, in his charter of privilege to the monastery of St. Peter of Cardena, says that the brethren have a right to cut timber where they please, or to walk or direct their carts through what lands they please†. From illustrious men even

* Jocelin de Brakelond.

† Yepes, i. 495.

who are without the Christian faith, monks are not left without proof of regard, either in ancient or modern times. Saladin offered to re-establish all the abbeys in Palestine which existed at the first domination of the Mussulmen, and he engaged to treat the monks well*. At the present day, in Africa, the monks of La Trappe are respected by the Moors. Even from the pagans religious men used to receive favours. Verecundus, a pagan, offered his country house of Cassiacum to St. Augustin. "Benignly he offered his villa to us," says the saint, "saying that as long as we remained in that place we might inhabit it. Retribues illi Domine, in resurrectione justorum. Fidelis promissor, reddes Verecundo pro rure illo ejus Cassiaco ubi ab æstu seculi requievimus in te, amœnitatem sempiternæ virentis paradisi tui †." Remarkable words, by the way, which should teach the world to distinguish between truly religious men, who are never wanting in gratitude or any natural virtue, and mere passionate advocates, seduced by the light of their own too violent will, wanting in all but zeal to espouse the cause which it chooses to espouse—words which should teach it never to confound faith with an odious, narrow-minded fanaticism, pretending a celestial root, because it bears no fruit of humanity. Many men, not Catholics, have visited monasteries with interest and respect. Some of them have even given lands and houses to religious orders, saying, perhaps, with Milton himself,

" And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown, and mossy cell."

Alas! there are pious people, as the phrase is, who observe them without any esteem, or without making any allowance for their unavoidable mistakes; but where ingratitude and unfairness reign, there dwells nor love nor honour. These men, whatever they may be, will live in the affections of those who consistently cling to Catholicity in spite of scandals, as assuredly their names should never be uttered by any who respect virtue without grateful wishes for their present and everlasting happiness.

But to return. The monastic orders, whatever some may fancy or wish to believe, have been esteemed and respected by the greatest statesmen, profoundest thinkers, and most cautious and accurate observers of modern times; and one may safely, I think, predicate that institutions which, while flourishing, have obtained the admiration of such men as Burke and Leibnitz; and, in their fall, the regrets of such writers as Tanner, Dugdale, and Johnson, need not be much concerned at the abuse with

* Mat. Paris, 1183.

† Confess. ix. 3.

which they are assailed by certain members of Parliament and itinerant Irish orators of the present day, who certainly, in point of knowledge of the subject, cannot exactly be compared with these historians of the seventeenth century, or, in regard to wisdom, with the greatest philosopher that Germany, or perhaps Europe, could ever boast of. Here, then, is the index standing by the way near the end, thus to direct all who pass to the centre; for a religion which has produced, during at least fifteen centuries, institutions that obtain the suffrage of the wisest and most virtuous men, in uninterrupted succession, can hardly prove to be that system of error which it is represented to be by its enemies and by those who only judge of it from their malicious report, based not on facts, but on the preconceived suggestions of ignorance and prejudice. It remains to take into account the character of those who are systematically hostile to the religious orders; and that this consideration must avail somewhat in adjusting the scales between Catholicism in this form, and the objections which are opposed to it, will hardly prove, I think, after noticing a few facts, a doubtful proposition.

"There is an infallible way," says the Count de Maistre, "of judging of an institution as well as of a man, and that is, to remark by whom it is loved, and by whom hated. Now, you will not find a single enemy of religion and of the state, a single advocate of revolution and of illuminism, a single enemy of the European system, who is not an enemy of those orders." As in English literature it is the name most odious to man and woman which occurs to memory whenever one hears of men writing against the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, so is it ever spirits the most remote from gentleness and every thing that the noblest intelligences esteem, who are noted as the most violent enemies of these retreats. On their side we have found all that the world has produced of most excellent in the order of sanctity, learning, and government. It might be said we have found almost every one that takes delight in goodness. And who are those who hate them? Those who are all that all good men must hate; those who might have been their tempter's tutor; those sad people that hate the light and curse society, whose thoughts are deaths, who form secret fraternities that would betray you to a faith black and satanical; all the avowed enemies of Christianity, transparent, too, without dissection, looking like those figures of sinister aspect in a picture of the Passion; in fine, all traitors to kings and republics, men who would introduce on earth confusion and misery, provided they could fill their own pockets. "But you will tell me," says the count, "that there are some respectable men among their enemies. At present no doubt there are; but these respectable men find themselves in very bad company, which does not

happen to the friends of these orders." Unquestionably there is no want of eminent men far from the thoughts of all such arch-villany as we have been naming; and, alas! no want of brilliant writers, too, who declare themselves the enemies of the religious orders as of Catholicity in every form, devising things never seen or heard to impair both, and gratify their credulous adversaries; but perhaps they only verify what Lord Brook says in his tragedy of *Mustapha*,—

"Man then doth show his reason is defaced,
When rage thus shows itself with reason graced."

As for the common reprovers, their verdict only exemplifies what Hazlitt says, that "mere ignorance is a blank canvas, on which we lay what colours we please, and print objects black or white, as angels or devils; and in the vacuum either of facts or arguments, the weight of prejudice and passion falls with double force, and bears down every thing before it." Besides, for what virtues would you have us take notice of them? Are they not often men like that smell-feast in the *Woman-Hater*, who would entreat the duke to take notice of him "for any thing; for being an excellent farrier, for playing well at span-counter or sticking knives in walls, for being well read, deeply learned, and thoroughly grounded in the hidden knowledge of all sauces and salads whatsoever, for being understandingly read in the necessities of the life of epicures, for being impudent, or for nothing?" Are they not often men avaricious, artful, perfidious, and callous to humanity, who treat their dependants with the harshness of a bad policeman? The people at least set them down as such. "My dear, have you lost a half-sovereign?" said a young person, ill concealing malice by the epithet, as one of "the force" was seen rather muddled and groping in the gutter. The bitter irony can well represent the sentiments with which the monk-hunters, even in times of order, are frequently, for other reasons besides that hostility, regarded by the population. The truth is, they are often men who hold all to be infidels that will not believe the Court Catechism; who, like Pepys, fall into ecstasies at the sight of rich embroidered suits, saying, "The show was so glorious that we are not able to look at it any longer, our eyes being so much overcome." Some ignorant and simple persons, too, may be frightened at the mere thought of beholding a hooded head, because certain tongues, whose venom, by traducing spotless honour, hath spread its infection, are employed against antiquity. Their answer may be brief,—

"The vulgar know not why they fear, nor what,
But in their humours too inconstant be;
Nothing seems strange to them but constancy."

But the vulgar—in the true Horatian sense of the term—behold the natural-born enemy of all these institutions and of the persons belonging to them!

“Where may high virtue live securely free,
 Keeping its honour safe? Not with the living;
 They feed upon opinions, errors, dreams,
 And make ’em truths; they draw a nourishment
 Out of defamings, grow upon disgraces;
 And, when they see a goodness fortified
 Strongly above the battery of their tongues,
 Oh, how they cast to sink it! and, defeated,
 Soul-sick with poison strike the monuments
 Where noble names lie sleeping.”

Beginning with the early records of Christianity, we find that the licentious class of pagans regarded the monks with peculiar aversion. St. Augustin says that “the heathens, when they recognized the servants of God in passing, used to say to themselves, ‘O miseros istos! quid perdunt!’” “The pagans shave their heads,” says St. Ambrose, “if they assist at the mysteries of Isis; but if a Christian should change his habit to become a monk, they call it an unworthy action. *Equidem doleo tantam esse in mendacio observantiam, in veritate negligentiam* *.” The corrupt society to which Salvian, in the fifth century, ascribed the ruin of the Roman empire, entertained the same aversion for the religious orders. “We cannot indeed say,” continues this author in his rhetorical style, “that men hate these monks and servants of God without cause; for the greatest cause of discord is the diversity of wills, and in these all things seem contrary to their pleasure; for they live in wickedness, these in innocence; they in luxury, these in holiness; they in circuses, these in monasteries; they with the enemy of man, these with the Saviour of man. Not without cause, therefore, did all hooded men in Africa seem the proper objects of execration to the impious, and worthy of being exterminated. See what was the faith of Africa, and especially of Carthage. It was safer for the apostles to enter the cities of pagans, where their first appearance caused less hatred than to be seen among these Christians. Athens heard Paul preach in public, and the Lycaonians esteemed the apostles divine men; but at Carthage the servants of God could not appear in the streets without exciting ridicule and execration †.”

Passing on to the middle ages, we are presented with traces of the same phenomena. If we look sharp for them, there is still to be found a similar race of men, who raise their pride to such

* Epist. 30 ad Sabinum.

† viii. 5.

a pitch and glory, that goodness shows like gnats scorned under them; men who are ready to cry out, like the Cyclops, with the poet, "What care I for sacred promontories and temples? As for these *χαίρειν κελεύω* to eat and drink, and care for nothing, is the Jupiter of the wise. Let those be cursed who have embarrassed human life with other laws and cares*." It is the fostering of conscience which inflicts a wound that with an iron pen is writ in brass on the tough hearts of such men, now grown a harder metal. It is the invitation to consider that exasperates them. "Consider! That were a simple toy, in faith," they cry. "Consider! Whose moral's that? The man that says 'Consider' is our foe: let my steel know him." Besides, great men are not safe in their own vice, where good men are planted to survey their workings. Sometimes it is merely as brutal neighbours persecuting the religious that this antagonistic character breaks out. So in 1308, when the Templars were all seized, a certain count, thinking it a good opportunity, and hating the order of Grandmont for the crime he had himself committed in wounding and mutilating some of the brethren at Bursey, for which he was justly condemned to pay a fine by the king's court, went to the pope to accuse the order†. The community of the abbey of Porta was at one time established in the barbarous religion of Smollena, where the abbot having given offence to a certain Slavus, the friend of a noble who had died excommunicated, and had been buried in his church during his absence, this man came in the night and crept in by a window, in order to take vengeance on him; after escaping which danger, the abbot and monks resolved to abandon the place, and seek a more secure spot‡. In 1290 the monastery of Reinhardsborn was burnt by malefactors. After some time, Conrad and Albert, living under the counts of Henneberg, their patrons, were accused of the crime; and the arbitrators chosen condemned them to rebuild the chapel of the Blessed Virgin, and to pay yearly two marks to supply lights for the altar in the same chapel, which, with the abbey, in a few years, by the alms of the population, was wholly rebuilt§. Guests even, as we have seen, were often the same as enemies and plunderers. Frederic II., landgrave of Thuringia, in 1324, being seduced by the levity of his youthful age, and by nefarious and perverse counsellors, forgetful of his ancestors who so cherished the monastery, came to Reinhardsborn to prey, as it were, upon it, with almost all the nobles of Thuringia, with Henry, landgrave of Hesse, Henry, duke of Saxony, Bertold,

* Eurip. Cyclop. 339.

† Levesque, Annal. Grandmont. 111.

‡ Chronic. Portensis.

§ Thuringia Sacra, 126.

count of Henneberg, and with eighty horses. They entered on a Sunday, and remained four days in the abbey. This is what Tentzelius says*. Some monasteries endeavoured to oppose the abuse of hospitality, and an example of the consequences is thus related by an ancient historian: "Gaufrid de Cona, elected the seventeenth abbot of St. Martin of Tours, stood manfully for the rights of his church against the count of Blois, who insisted on all the right of gist there. The abbot resisted, and so the count caused the servants, and even some of the monks of the abbey, to be scourged; and, moreover, he seized wherever he could the goods of the monastery. Two of the brethren, between Fonte Mella and Chosiacus, were cast down a precipice from a high rock by his satellites. Not content with this, he at last laid snares for the abbot, caught him, and cast him into prison in his castle of Guyse, where he lay seven years undiscovered, the monks all the while not knowing what had become of him, and making processions and praying God for his return. At length, by the will of God, the cook of the abbot happened to pass by the castle of Guyse, and the abbot looking out at a window saw and recognized him, and then called out to him loudly, 'I am Brother Gaufrid de Cona. How are my brethren the monks? Have they forgotten me?' The servant, all amazed and full of sorrow, returned to the abbey and told what he had discovered. The monks immediately sent messengers to the pope and the king of France, imploring aid to recover their abbot. The count hearing of this was full of dismay, and then covering the abbot's head with a veil, and tying his hands and feet, he thrust him out of the castle, and left him in a certain ditch near the priory of Espernon. Soon after it happened that the prior of Espernon passed that way, and hearing the abbot calling out for assistance, on coming to the spot found him in that deplorable condition. After this escape he returned to the abbey, where he lies buried near the almonry†." Mathieu Paris, speaking of the losses sustained by the monasteries of Ramsay and St. Edmundsbury, says, "The age inclined so generally to pillage and rapine, that every extortion practised on monks appeared to be rather a merit than a demerit‡. One day," he adds, "that I and the Lord Roger de Thurkeby, a knight and a learned man, were eating in a friendly way at the same table, the conversation turned on the lugubrious subject of the sufferings of the English people, barons, knights, citizens, merchants, labourers, and principally monks; and as I related instances, the knight replied, with a serious tone, 'The hour is come, O monk, when all those who oppress you think that they

* Thuringia Sacra, 144.

† De Gestis Episcop. Turon.

‡ Ad ann. 1252.

render service to God. In fact, these unjust vexations amount to a total ruin.' On hearing which words I recalled to memory the prophecy respecting the end of the world, when men will love only themselves*." Brother Mathieu, however, seems to have been rather hasty in applying the prediction so peculiarly to his own times, since it would be hard to point out an age when similar results, under one form or another, were not found. In every century

" Ingrateful man, with liquorish draughts
And morsels unctuous, greases his pure mind,
That from it all consideration slips."

At all times the rules of those, who by an especial vocation seem called to be first in the future kingdom, cannot be understood, and ought not to be submitted to the judgment of any other class of Christians; but certainly they are beyond the comprehension of men who know no further than their sensual appetites or wanton lusts have taught them, and who regard all things through the medium of their own dishonesty or prejudice. Such persons will, of course, misconstrue whatever pertains to the religious orders, calling it a living humour of madness to forswear the full stream of the world, and to live in a nook merely monastic. They who themselves lose and neglect the creeping hours of time will style the monks idle drones. "A foolish man," says St. Stephen of Grandmont, "is anxious to inquire about a goodman as to his employment, when he sees him remaining in one place and apparently doing nothing. But he should consider that a labourer may be confined all day to a spot of earth without his being necessarily idle. Why, then, should he think so of one who remains with God, and walks with God through heaven and earth in thought†?" But the truth is, that there is a determination to reprove in such cases, which leads men into self-contradiction and the grossest injustice. St. Chrysostom says, "If seculars perceive any monk who does not treat his body with the very utmost rigour, but provides in the least degree for its necessity, they load him with reproaches and calumnies; and, extending their reproof to others, they call all monks gluttons and debauched. For seculars think that monks put on another nature, laying aside all humanity." It would require more than the "fugatores ranarum" of the abbey of Corby, in Picardy, who, by the way, were free men, to silence the monotonous chorus of such voices, that age after age will be heard round the monastic habitations. It skills not that their inmates, unwearied in acts of benevolence, give no offence to any

* Ad ann. 1252.

† S. Stephani Grandim. Liber Sententiarum, cap. 54.

one, like the Capuchins in the time of Henry IV., when Pierre Mathieu observed, "The enemies of the religious orders know not what to say against them, because their lives correspond to their doctrine *." That very conformity constitutes a sufficient offence in the estimation of many; and some even using a foreign speech, "a tongue not learned near Isis, or studied by the Cam," will turn into a crime their upholding civilization itself. "Thou hast most traitorously corrupted," they will say, "the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar-school; it will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear"—charges, by the way, which may lead our new reformers to enlarge their catalogue of instances in which paganism was transmitted by the religious orders. Yes, my noble monk-hater, the world that goes with thee shall never put thee to thy classics, mathematics, metaphysics, philosophy, and I know not what sufficiencies; if thou canst but have the wit to defame enough, talk and make a noise enough, be impudent enough, and it is enough.

That very habit which the holy fathers renouncing the world resolved to wear as an indication of innocence and humility; that venerable and majestic robe, consecrated with such solemn prayer that it might receive a blessing from Jesus Christ, who deigned to clothe Himself with our mortality, as in the words of the ritual, where it is said, "*Hoc genus vestimentorum quod sancti patres ad innocentiae et humilitatis judicium ferre sanxerunt*†;" that last and solitary vestige of primitive ages, associated with so many heroic and glorious recollections, becomes a scandal to them. Yes, a scandal, for no other word will suit their deliberately composed documents: the act of appearing in it is officially declared to be a scandal, a public scandal. Now undoubtedly every one is free to like or dislike the dress which others wear; and perhaps the forms of some religious habits lately introduced seems, artistically speaking, at least to be not such as to satisfy fully every eye. Moreover, no one requires to be told that there may be circumstances when good sense, and charity, and kindness require changes, disuses, or disguise, and when it is both foolish and inhuman to persist in unessential things, which give offence to those whom all are bound to conciliate and to love; but this word scandal, of which the religious meaning every person knows, crudely, unreservedly applied to such a thing as the monastic habit in general, would, on common occasions, seem almost to furnish an occasion for the expression of a witty observer, who is not very delicate in his choice of epithets,

* Hist. de Hen. IV. liv. iv.

† Constitutiones Fratrum Ord. Prædicatorum, dist. i.

where he speaks of something that would disgrace a cook-maid or a toothless aunt ; when it falls from the pen of a bearded and senatorial man, speaking for one who never desires to utter any thing but what is in accordance with majesty, who is born and trained up as a sovereign to know the awful power and strength of his prerogative, not in their indulgence to give sanctuary in any unjust proceeding to the spite and bigotry of his grooms, one might expect to hear the same strong writer qualify it as "nauseous, antiperistaltic, and emetical." But the fact is, that no moderation, no prudence, no kindness, no respect for the prejudices of others, can disarm the kind of rage which a certain class indulges in. It is not they who can enter into the spirit of our "national poet," saying,

"Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train."

Such persons have been led to believe the monastic state in every form an outrage to humanity and a falsehood. They resist all proof that it may be suitable and necessary for some of the Christian family. They can neither be taught sense nor respect for the common charities of life. They can neither learn nor blush ; and therefore, in holding up as objects of aversion some of the best of the human race, they keep the field and triumph, for the reason that "upon their own brows shame is ashamed to sit." The sight of the Capitol disabled the Roman judges from condemning Manlius, as it recalled the memory of his achievements. These men, within the very walls of the old monastery which, though in its ruins, can attract more admirers than can all their own boasted works, judge those who erected them without equity, and condemn without reserve. The institution itself, when seen still existing in all its active usefulness, receives no other treatment from their hands. It is the same sentence, when they stand on St. Benedict's holy mount or in the lovely peninsula of Hauterive—

"Yes, you have been to see them both—alas !
Some minds improve by travel, others rather .
Resemble copper wire or brass,
Which gets the narrower by going farther !"

"It is a dull thing," says Conon, "for a man to travel like a mill-horse, still in the place he was born in, lamed and blinded." Lord Collingwood, that model of an English hero, wrote from off Cape St. Vincent after the victory, saying, "The Spaniards always carry their patron saint to sea with them, and I have given their picture of St. Isidro a berth in my own cabin."

These travelled monk-haters, who might say, like Onos, in the Queen of Corinth, "I repent? you are mistaken, I never repented any thing yet in my life," resemble him described in the old comedy as "one who carried out as good staple-manners as any in Suffolk, but returned without one prejudice less or one new idea acquired; only with a shrug and looks as if he would maintain oil and salads against a chine of beef, and scarcely allow us fully reduced to civility for serving up mutton in whole joints." For such gallants the monastery is only so much foreign popery, worse, perhaps, even than the British which they left at home. But what are their declamations worth? Perhaps our old dramatist can supply the best answer:

"— As all drugs serve for some use,
Give them your physician, and let him
Apply them to make sick his patient's stomach;
This way they may be useful."

At all events, as a wittier observer says,

"People who hold such absolute opinions
Should stay at home in Protestant dominions."

Another class of enemies, whose sentence can hardly seem decisive in the judgment of the young and generous, consists of the descendants of those men who came in for the lion's share of the plunder of the religious houses. "That unhallowed booty," to use the words of the author of *Coningsby*, "created a factitious aristocracy, ever fearful that they might be called upon to regorge their sacrilegious spoil. To prevent this they took refuge in political religionism; and paltering with the disturbed consciences or the pious fantasies of a portion of the people, they organized them into religious sects. These became the unconscious prætorians of their ill-gotten domains. At the head of these religionists they have continued ever since to govern, or powerfully to influence, this country." To these men the monastic institutions are associated with every feeling that creates hatred and contempt.

But there are in some countries foes to the monasteries of a still darker kind than any we have as yet seen—men bred in the declining and decay of virtue, betrothed to their own vices; hungry and ambitious of infamy, invested in all deformity, enthralled to ignorance and malice, of a hidden and concealed malignity, and that hold a concomitancy with all evil. "The times of the desert," says Chateaubriand, contemplating these persons, "are returned. Christianity recommences in the sterility of the Thebaïde in the midst of a formidable idolatry, the idolatry of man worshipping himself." The representative of this last class of enemies might, if studied well, serve to guide

us far. Scoffs and ribaldry are his weapons. He will sooner lose his soul than a jest, and profane the most holy things to excite laughter ; no honourable or reverend personage whatsoever can come within the reach of his eye, but is turned into all manner of variety by his adulterate similes. Shall we describe farther this hater of the religious orders, who thinks he can never sufficiently, or with admiration enough, deliver his affectionate conceit of foreign atheistical policies ?

“ Nay, let him go, and sink into the ground ;
For such as he are better lost than found.”

But now, companion, I observe you noble, and not apt to throw derision on these institutions with the rest, which does encourage me to ask you a question. Let us to a mild question. Have your mild answer. Tell us honestly, is not the hatred of all these men more or less significative ? Must it not be something divine that sets their wisdoms in combustion, and from which they, at least in some instances, so instinctively recoil ? For after all, when every thing has been said and done, why should such invincible hatred be excited by opening a noble and beautiful retreat for those who want and desire to retire ; by creating a field of useful activity for those who would be useless in isolation ; by supplying a resource for innumerable casualties to which our frail mortality is subject ? That any thing of this kind should cause such frowns, such hatred, such persecution, does seem marvellous. What is the mystery of this strange passion ?

“ ———— How should this grow
I know not ; but, I am sure, 'tis safer to
Avoid what's grown, than question how 'tis born.”

Men, if they please, may, following the choice of the ancient Gauls and Germans, prefer Mercury, the god of inventions, of highways, and of commerce, to all the songs of Apollo *. These things, as we have often had occasion to remark, so far from being condemned by Catholicity, are by it pronounced admirable ; but it seems truly to be neither safe nor wise to come forward before the world and hold up for condemnation those persons who, for aught we can know to the contrary, may be only following the counsels of the great God who is to judge us all ; since, as Antonio de Guevara observes, “ For the prophet to say that no man should open that which he would shut, and that no man should shut that which he would open, is to teach us that no man should be so hardy as to approve what he condemns, and to

* Cæsar, lib. vi. 17. Tacitus de Germania, 9.

condemn what he approves." No one requires you to visit monasteries, or to have any connexion with their inmates; but when advised to go out of your way to condemn or injure them, a voice from central truth assuredly will say, "Resist this black temptation; thy ill genius whispered it." Offer, if you will, incense to the Muses, but do not at the same time stone the prophets.

Among the opponents of these institutions are some men, however, of a different class from any that we have as yet noticed. The world remarks amidst them certain ecclesiastics, and thinks it a strange dearth of enemies when they seek foes among themselves; but, without being unfair, it remarks too that these are generally men whose views are in little accordance with the supernatural end at which the religious aim. "The Lord gave me," says St. Francis, "such a faith in priests who live according to the forms of the holy Roman Church on account of their order, that, however they might persecute me, I wish to recur to them*." It would seem to be tedious and disagreeable to adduce instances of this kind of dislike, directed by ecclesiastics against the religious orders. It can be traced from early times, through even some great men, as Arnoul, bishop of Orleans, in the tenth century—when the bishops sought not only jurisdiction in spirituals over monasteries, but to make monks their vassals and abbeys their fiefs—down to those corrupt prelates who, like the Cardinal de Brienne in the last century, presided at the suppression of monasteries. A great prince, who, like the Cardinal de Medicis, as Mabillon heard, never expended less than twenty-five louis d'or's per day in ices and refreshing drinks, cannot be expected to understand these orders much better than an alderman, who at a meal hath more several kinds of animals served up than the ark contained, and who when buried would have, like Lazarillo, instead of tears and holy water, capon-sauce poured upon his coffin. There is a jealousy, too, that undermines their favour with some churchmen, who resemble mercenary post-boys, in having letters that carry truth, while it is their guise to fill their mouths with ill-according words, and with many things that are not in the mass; for that spirit, undescribed by human language, which sometimes shows so poorly in a local pastor playing such strange antics before laymen and parishioners, will never spare the hooded head. In its mildest form a curious instance is pointed out by the historian of the Order of the Holy Trinity. "It is strange," he says, "that Henry of Ghent should make no mention of St. Thomas Aquinas in his list of illustrious men and great ecclesiastical writers, of whom he could not have been

* Testamentum S. Francisci.

ignorant, since he was almost his fellow-student while hearing Albert the Great, and being himself a public opponent of Thomas. This seems to prove," observes Baron, "that he was a secular priest *."

Trithemius says that many of the secular clergy persecuted the poor Carmelites on their first coming into Europe, when expelled from Mount Carmel in Palestine by the Turks, and that they would not allow them at first so much as to bury their dead in their own convents; but that the sanctity of their lives disposed great men to build and endow many houses of their order †. Addressing some secular clerks, he says, "*Quis nesciat quod promarsupii vestris bellum contra sanctas fraternitates geritis, et monachos non amore Dei, sed auri laceratis ‡?*" William of Newbury, describing one of these characters, when writing of the year 1181, sums up the qualities of Roger, archbishop of York, in these terms: "In officio episcopali, hoc est, in cura animarum minus sollicitus, in his autem quæ officio non Deus, sed propter Deum mundus annexuit conservandis, et promovendis efficaciter studiosus; for he so provided for the temporal wants of his diocese in revenues and edifices, that he left nothing to desire to his successors; occasions of avarice he excelled in using. Christian philosophers, that is, religious men or monks, he had in such horror, that he is related to have said of Turstin, archbishop of York, of happy memory, that he never committed a greater fault than in building that great arsenal of Christian philosophy, the abbey of Fountains; and when the hearers seemed shocked and scandalized at the word, 'You are laics,' said he, 'and cannot understand the force of the words.' ... Moreover, it is certain that in this wondrous blindness, though in other respects a most acute man, he thought he rendered service to God; for in his last sickness, and when he was near his end, a certain monastic superior came to him, with whom I was intimate, a good and simple man, humbly demanding that he would deign to confirm with his hand what his holy predecessors, by the instinct of divine love, had granted to the same place; to whom he answered, 'I am dying, and because I fear God I durst not do what you ask;' so solidly did he hold that to none less than to philosophers of this kind ought favour to be shown. That he passed his life more in shearing than in feeding his flock appeared at his death, when not a few thousand marks of silver were found in his treasury, while so many poor of Christ were in distress, to whom, at his death, when he could use it no longer, he gave some part—a rather late distributor; while the

* *Annales Trin.* 291.

† *De Laudibus Ord. Frat. Carmelitar. lib. i.*

‡ *De Laud. S. Annæ.*

king seized the rest, seemingly by a divine judgment, to teach others to heap up treasures in heaven*." It should be added, however, that some of these ecclesiastical enemies, towards the close of their lives, expressed regret for having opposed or persecuted the religious orders. "The penitence of Hugues de Nuant, bishop of Coventry, at his death, was wonderful," says Mathieu Paris; "all who beheld him sobbed and wept. His bitter remorse arose from his having driven out the monks of Coventry, and replaced them by irreligious secular clerks. He implored the abbot of Bee, who was present, to clothe him in their habit, hoping that, in order to shame the evil one, he might have as patrons in the next those whom he had persecuted in this world †."

But if the hatred cherished by earthly minds in general against the religious orders be significative, not less so, assuredly, are the acts of destruction to which it leads. What honourable things they cast behind them! what monuments of man! The natural forest has its enemies, which may not unfitly represent certain ravagers of the Church's vineyard. The wild wood has provision for the protection of its tender plants in thorny places, which animals in general will avoid. The ox and the cow will effectually be kept off by means of them; but there is no place impenetrable to swine, and they will destroy, and level, and efface root and branch even what the thorns cover.

Three classes of enemies have ravaged and destroyed monasteries. The first to assail them were pagans, Moors, and open adversaries of the Christian name, as the barbarians and Normans in France, the Danes in England, the Huns in Germany and Italy, and the Moors in Spain. These hordes generally burnt down and pillaged the religious houses. In Andalusia and Estremadura the Moors levelled to the ground all the monasteries of St. Benedict, nor did any more rise up in their place throughout Old Castille; the military orders alone keeping up devotion to St. Benedict, and also some hermitages which are supposed to be vestiges of the ancient monasteries, which the military orders seized †. The second class of destroyers arose at the preaching of Luther and Calvin. Now when it is a question of these men amongst the respectable classes, who adore their memory, it may be more polite to speak in Greek; and therefore, citing Strabo, I would say, *Ἐπίθρονος ὃν ὁ πλοῦτος δυσφύλακτος ἐστι, καὶ ἱερὸς ἢ ὧς*. The Reformers, it is sufficient to say, verified the ancient observation. They seemed to have for maxim that "money makes men eternal." They were consequently more intent upon appropriating for their own use the property and buildings of the monks than upon wanton, savage

* Rer. Anglie. iii. c. 5.

† Ad ann. 1198.

‡ Yepes i. 128.

§ lib. ix.

nor any other resources." In the first attacks of the Lutherans upon the monasteries in Germany, we find from the complaints of the abbot and monks of Porta, and from other documents, that the nobility were in the van of their enemies: "*Contendo, monasteria non nisi nobilium usibus esse destinata* *." Such was the maxim of the nobles, which it would have been construed rude to contradict in those times, when each lord was worshipped as an idol, though "it had been so often found by sad experience that they were mere men, if vice debauched them not to beasts." In England, too, as the Comte de Maistre remarks, it was the nobility of the first and second class that accepted the goods of the religious orders under Henry VIII. and his successors; whereas, in France, those who profited by the robbery were all of the commercial class, and even of the inferior grades of that class. In other countries, again, it was the king who was the executioner and receiver. In Sweden all the great houses, like Wadstena, where learning and sanctity had constantly flourished from their foundation, were destroyed by Gustavus Vasa, who, knowing the influence of the monks on the people, determined to get rid of them; for which purpose he introduced false brethren attached to Lutheranism, and made them superiors, while he took possession of the costly shrines, and imposed enormous levies. The monastery of Gripsholm, so celebrated in the history of Sweden, was converted by him into a fortress, and the community suppressed, to the general discontent of the nation †. The convent of Wadstena was the most majestic of all those in Scandinavia. The Duke Magnus of Ostrogothland, son of Gustavus Vasa, to whom this convent fell by lot, excited by sanguinary preachers of the new Gospel, fell one night upon the convent, carried off three of the nuns, and, after barbarous treatment, had their heads cut off; he then ordered the marble statues of St. Bridget and St. Catherine to be mutilated, cutting off their heads, and substituting for them those of Bacchanals. He was then seventeen years old, and his madness dates from that horrible moment.

Upon the whole, therefore, the result of these measures was the transmission of property into new hands, the old religious house becoming the palace of the great landed proprietor, who in those times might not unfrequently have been qualified without exaggeration as a slave and villain, that was twentieth part the title of the precedent lord—a vice of states, a cut-purse of the realm, that stole, and plundered, and put the money in his pocket, leaving only picturesque ruins for others—to use the

* Chron. Portensis.

† Theiner, La Suède et le St. Siège.

words of a poet whose verses are generally more characteristic of his epoch than inspiring, only

“———— A mouldering wall with ivy crown’d,
The Gothic turret, pride of ancient days,
Now but of use to grace a rural scene ;
To bound our vistas, and to glad the sons
Of George’s reign, reserv’d for fairer times.”

Thus, at that period, were the monasteries destroyed, the forest showing an image of the catastrophe ; for

“————The flourishing oak,
For his extent of branches, stature, growth,
The darling and the idol of the wood,
Whose awful nod the under trees adore,
Shook by a tempest, and thrown down, must needs
Submit his curled head, and full-grown limbs,
To every common axe, be patient, while
The torture’s put to every joint, the saws
And engines making, with their very noise,
The forests groan and tremble ; but not one,
When it was in its strength and state, revil’d it,
Whom poverty of soul and envy sends
To gather sticks from the tree’s wish’d-for ruin,
The great man’s emblem !”

The third and last class of destroyers has been formed by the revolutionists of the eighteenth century, instigated by the philosophy of Voltaire. How black sin doth scatter her seed betimes, and every ground is fruitful ! At this recent epoch the blood of monks was shed with that impious rage which France derived from the buffooneries of its arch-sophist, and the atheistical madness of his grim satellites. The burlesque, too, mingles horribly with these execrable scenes. The “Directoire” of the district, we read, on one occasion, “considering that the brass chandeliers of the altar, and the iron rails round the choir of the abbey of Pontigny, may be very useful to the republic, give orders that the rails be converted into pikes, and the chandeliers into cannon. Given at Saint-Florentin le 20 brumaire de l’an 11 de la République une et indivisible. Les Administrateurs du district.” The signatures follow. In still more recent times, in April, 1845, the official Gazette of Madrid announced schemes almost as significant as consequent upon acts of the same kind. “The Minister of Finances,” it said, “has given orders to make out a list of monasteries not yet sold, in order that the government may assign them a destination, either as barracks, government offices, or houses of correction, and when they are not fit for any such purposes, that the produce of sale may be paid into

the treasury." Thus, part of what is on the continent termed progressive improvement looks very like the old process described by Plato, in his description of the generation and transformation of states; for he says, "The democratic public, becoming like one tyrant, must have armies; and then, in order to support all its expenses, it will begin by stripping the temples; and as long as the produce of the sale of sacred things lasts, all goes on well; but as this soon fails, it has need of forced levies on the people. Then it must purge the state from all who are wise and good. Strange manner of purging it! since it does the contrary of physicians, who purge bodies in taking what is bad, and leaving what is good *." It is a maxim of the civil law that the accused person is looked upon with more favour than the accuser; and where rights are doubtful, *Reo favendum est potius quam actori*. The monasteries and monks, however, were not to reap any advantage from such principles. In their regard every prejudice was to have full scope and action, for by some means or other their ruin was to be accomplished. You speak of their useful, innocent, poetic life; of their learning, and love of learning; how they favoured literature, and preserved the classic authors; but the answer is like that given to Cle-anthes, when she appeals to the example of *Æneas*,—

" ————— We've no leisure now
To hear lessons read from Virgil; we are past school,
And all this time their judges."

" Nil juvat, ingenuis teneram formasse juventam
Artibus, et mores edocuisse bonos,
Tot claros genuisse viros, quos nescia mortis
Innumeris loquitur fama voluminibus,
Semina divinæ legis sparsisse per urbes,
Oppida et agrestis fumida tecta casæ,
Pulvillis regum morientum, inopumque grabatis
Advigilasse pari, nocte dieque, fide,
Tinxisse extremas sudore et sanguine terras,
Quas oriens Phœbus lustrat et occiduus,
Ut regio nusquam nostri non plena laboris
Pro Christo et sancta religione foret.
Nil juvat; exigimur laribus, disjungimur atque
Fraterno inviti solvimur officio.
Proh, tantum potuit vis conjurata malorum!
Tantum hominum cæcæ pectora noctis habent!
Scilicet aurea sæcla tibi reditura putabas,
Europa, nostri clade sodalitiî:
Credula, tolle oculos, partem circumfer in omnem,
Et, quæ sit facies rerum hodierna, vide!

*Aspicias infestos populos agitataque regna
Alterum in alterius proruere exitium,
Templa profanata et pollutas credibus aras,
Undique et horrenti diruta tecta situ,
Cive domos vacuas, desertaque rura colonis,
Perfugium miseris vix super exulibus."*

The scholars and antiquarians of former times wrote *Italia Sacra*, *Bavaria Sancta*; it was reserved for their posterity to write *Italia Impia*, *Bavaria Desolata*; and no one, methinks, of gentle education will envy these later generations their novel task, or deem the central truth obscured by the events which they have to commemorate; for after all, whatever may be one's hopes of the future, or one's devotion to assist at its advancement, these Catholic institutions have in reality done nothing to earn this mortal grudge, and call down upon themselves such destruction. Look over their labours and their lives, and judge if there be any ills of their creating. "Oh, think," as the poet says, "the motives of this hatred worthy of debating! Well has time wrought the fall of many things belonging to the past; well has it swept away cruel persecutors, stained with many a bloody crime; but it was not Dominick, or Francis, or Benedict, who ordained such laws, or executed them, or approved of them. Man loves to strive with man, but these eschewed the guilty feud, and all fierce strifes abhorred.

'Nay, they were gentle as sweet heaven's dew,
Beside the red and horrid drops of war,
Weeping the cruel hates men battle for,
Which worldly bosoms nourished in their spite.'

To estimate, however, fully the signal furnished by the character of those who destroyed these institutions while professing a regard for Christianity, one ought to take into consideration the violation of justice, and the reckless contempt for those ancient spiritual provisions to secure their existence, which the act of destroying or of appropriating them comprised. The ecclesiastical and the civil laws of the whole Christian world had ever pronounced inviolable the monasteries, and whatever goods belonged to them. Thus, the charter of Gregory the Great to the monastery and hospital founded by Siagrius and Branichild, provided against its property being seized by any king or bishop n after times, for any cause or pretext whatsoever—"vel aliis quasi piis causis pro suæ avaritiæ excusatione posse concedere*." And the bull of Innocent III. to William, archbishop of Reims, professes to provide "ut quæ semel Deo dedicata sunt monasteria, semper mancant monasteria†." So in an ancient council

* Yepes i. 518.

† Id. i. 326.

we read, "Placuit ut loca jamdudum consecrata, et nunc spurcitiis fœdata, juxta possibilitatem in antiquum statum reformentur*." By the capitularies of Charlemagne, "buildings once erected into monasteries must remain such for ever, and cannot be converted into profane habitations;" though by another capitulary, where churches were too numerous, it was ordained that some might be taken down, and others in compensation built elsewhere. Now these views were adopted and confirmed by the legislation of every country in Europe. A contravention, therefore, of all ancient Christian law, human and divine, must be laid to the charge of those who took advantage of opportunities arising from social convulsions and arbitrary acts of kings to transform these abbeys into mansions for themselves. But this is not all. We should mark with what levity they set at nought the fearful maledictions which had been pronounced against all who should destroy or alienate the places and property set apart by heavenly disposed men for the friends and servants of God, and for the relief of the suffering classes of society. From an early age it had been the custom of the Church, when giving freedom to slaves and charters of emancipation to serfs, to invoke the wrath of the Almighty against all who should ever dare to recall these acts, and reduce back to slavery those who had been delivered from it. "If any one, quod fieri non credimus, shall hereafter revoke this liberty," say these documents, "iram Dei et sanctorum ejus ineurrat, et pœna inferni experire pertimescat†." Monasteries were placed under the safeguard of similar maledictions; as if to violate their means of existence and their immunities had been considered the same thing as to take away a source and guarantee of freedom for all mankind. The papal formulas to this effect undoubtedly suppose the existence of faith; but a contempt for them does not seem a legitimate consequence of renouncing it; for they were used to protect things essentially just and moral, which ought to be binding throughout all changes of views and condition, unlike others which may be only binding so long as men remain in an exceptional or sectarian state of mind; and it is not credible that a reckless contempt for them in such cases could have arisen from the dictates of conscience, from a deeper sense of moral responsibility, or from a more distinct apprehension of future judgment awaiting the unjust. At the risk of offending some delicate ears, let us produce what was pronounced against such acts of destruction by men who were unquestionably among the just of the earth, and devoted to the interests of all that is sacred and useful to humanity. It will enable us to judge at least of the depth of

* Burchardi Decret. lib. iii. c. xvi.

† Ap. Bib. de l'Ecole des Chartes III. tom. iv.

their convictions. The papal sentence was generally to this effect: "Nulli ergo omnino hominum liceat hanc paginam nostræ confirmationis infringere, vel ei ausu temerario contraire. Si quis autem hoc attentare præsumpserit, indignationem omnipotentis Dei, et beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum ejus se noverit incursurum." The charter of St. Edward the Confessor to Westminster Abbey concludes with invoking terrible images, saying, "Whosoever presumes or doth contrary to this my graunt, I will hee lose his name, worship, dignity, and power, and that with the great traytor Judas that betrayed our Saviour, he be, &c.; and I will and ordayne that this my graunt endure as long as there remayneth in England eyther love or dread of Christian name." A diploma granting certain lands to the monastery of the Holy Saviour of Leira, by King Garsias, ends in a similar manner. The words are, "If any future king or prince or count shall wish to alienate these lands from the same house, may God alienate him from his holy paradise, and make him an alien from the company of the blessed; may he be excommunicated and anathematized with anathema maran-atba; may he be separated from the Christian Church; and so, with Satan and Judas the traitor, who betrayed our Saviour, may he, &c. &c. I implore all future kings and princes, for the sake of God, and of holy Mary, his mother, and of the blessed martyrs Nunilo and Alodia, and of all the saints, never to molest or seize this offering which I make for my sins, either by force, or by will, or by judgment; but if any one should, may all our sins, and those of our parents and successors, for whose souls we offer it, rest upon his head, and in the day of judgment may he recognize his crime, and reap the consequences in his own soul. Amen *." The archives of Monte Cassino contain many such monuments. The donation of Furatus de Giti, of Sardinia, in barbarous Latin, ends as follows: "Et si quista carta destruere an desteterminare ea boluerit, istrumet Deus nomen suum de libro bitæ, et carnes ejus disrupat bolatilibus celi, e bestiis terræ, ed abeat malediczione de xii Adpostoli et de xvi Profetas et de xx e iiii seniores et de cccxviii Patres sanctos et canones disposuerunt in Ician cibitate et abeat malediczione de iiii Patriarhas Abraam, Isaac et Jacob, et abeat malediczione de iiii Evangelictas ed abeat malediczione de Gerubin, Exerobin qui tenent tronum Dei, ed abeat malediczione de ix hordines Angelorum, et de x Archangelorum, ed abeat malediczione de cxi et iiii millium, qui pro Domino paxi sunt ed abeat malediczione de beatro Petro alpostolo in cujus manus tradidit Deus elabes regni celorum, e de omnes sanctos et sanctas Dei amen. fiat. Et ii quista carta audire ea boluerit, et nostras hordinaciones confortaberit et dixerit quia bene est, habeat

* Hieron. Blanca, Arragon. Rer. Comment. 48.

benediczione de Deo," &c.* Supposing all this in the best Latin, there are thus in these documents, it must be owned, words of imprecation that at first sight would seem to wound the speaker more, and not reach him against whom they were directed ; besides, at the outset, it does appear to be an intrenchment upon Heaven so boldly to prescribe men's own revenge, a sin that might draw another punishment, great as the loss it was intended to ward off. Nevertheless, to those who are shocked at such menaces, and perhaps none of us can be so as much as those who uttered them, it may be observed that, in the first place, they were designed to protect men against themselves, to preserve them from danger ; and that they succeeded during a very long interval in securing for the interest of nations, and especially of the lower classes, great institutions, as favourable to liberty as to religion, which could not otherwise have been protected from the violence of men who respected no law. They were used as fetters for wild and unruly passions, as strait-waistcoats for ungovernable minds. They answered, therefore, one good end, without any expense of life or revenue. Thanks to them, even for a national object the public durst not meddle with consecrated property. King Richard being captive in Germany, there was no treasure in England that was not to be given up or redeemed ; but yet the shrine of St. Edmund, a symbol of what was set apart for the relief of man's estate, remained untouched, though the silver table of the high altar, and many other precious ornaments, had been given up for the king's redemption. It became a question before the justices of the Exchequer whether the shrine should not, at least in part, be stripped for the redemption. The abbot declared that he would not touch it, nor could any one compel him to do so, but that he would open the church doors, and let him do it who would. The justices then declared that neither would they dare to be the men, and so the shrine, with the rights that its inviolability included, remained for future generations†.

In the next place, it will be conceded that the protection of an institution favourable to justice, charity, and humanity, by invoking the aid of ideas and by purely spiritual weapons, however rudely fashioned, ought not to be confounded with the oppression and cruelty of mere brute force. But what concerns our purpose is, in fact, foreign from such considerations. We have only to show that the character of the men who violated such injunctions must have been evil ; and however we may smile at the Latinity of some of these formulas, or shudder at the consequences they hold up as prepared for those who incur the penalty of being just to neither God nor man, it will

* Hist. Cassinens. 238.

† Jocel. de Brakelond.

probably be conceded that those who, in order to enrich their own families, felt themselves free to cast to the winds the bonds which had been sufficient to maintain all preceding generations in the observance of the law of sacred property, must have been graduates not principiants in vice, and men whose verdict rather yields presumptive evidence in favour of any cause that they combine to attack or vilify. Their borrowed bravery was not suiting fair constructions. An evil signature was upon them, and it will last. True they seemed, by the force of new opinions, to have a conscience that approved of every thing. All men are philosophers to their inches; there were within them able philosophers in turning the times to their own profit. They called Heaven to witness that they only scorned man's usurpation, and put a period to the crafty impositions of subtle clerks; but here is enough to make us suspect that, could you see the fountain that sent forth so many cozening streams, you would say that Styx were crystal to it. One who knew them said, "To quarrel with church pictures, to come to church to show your new clothes and trinkets, and find fault with the Apostles for having worn such raiment—these are your virtues, your high and holiday devotions! What moral vices follow in the week is best known to your dark close friend that keeps the catalogue." Ay, truly they would make a wiser world, and an age that would beget new annals; but when their lives were written, these sons of pleasure equalled with Nero and Caligula; they were such instruments as wicked tyrants seek—men that mock divinity, that break each precept, both of God and man, and nature too, and do it without lust, but merely because it is a law and good, and persevere till he that taught them to deceive and cozen take them to his mercy. The Pythian oracle was to this effect: "The Pelasgium is better unoccupied*." So it might have been affirmed of the desecrated monastery. But with a simple belief in Providence the consequences, as related by such writers as Spelman, could surprise no one; for if ever there was a cold, unnatural, and shameless violation of the reverence which lurks at the bottom of the heart generally even of the most flagitious criminals, it was effected by these spoliators. For their conduct throughout the history of mankind has no parallels. "Antony robbed a house by what was thought consecrating it, by erecting an altar, by dedicating a statue; but these men rob houses by avowedly desecrating them, by throwing down altars, by profaning images, by doing '*omnia contra leges moremque majorum, temere, turbulente, per vim, per furorem*†.'" The Roman generals, when they took cities, could boast of having appropriated neither pictures nor statues

* Thueyd. ii.

† Cicero, pro Domo sua.

for the adornment of their own houses. Cicero dwells long upon this theme. "What," he demands, "shall I say of Marcellus, who took Syracuse, that most adorned city? What of L. Scipio, who waged war in Asia and conquered Antiochus? What of Flaminius, who subdued Philip of Macedon? What of L. Paulus, who overcame the Persian king? What of L. Mummius, who took that most beautiful and ornate Corinth, full of all things, as also many cities of Achaia and Bœotia?—*quorum domus, quum honore et virtute florent, signis et tabulis pictis erant vacuæ**." Not so the houses of those who included monasteries among the objects of their hostility. These became suddenly enriched with the glorious works of genius which their authors had consecrated to God, and offered frequently in token of personal gratitude to those asylums where they had found consolation. When Theodosius had destroyed the pagan temples, to show how little avarice entered into the motives which led to that measure, he ordered that all the money coming from it should be given to the poor. These reformers, or rather founders of what they declared to be the true religion, on the contrary, who turned into coin every thing that was capable of such transmutation, put the produce very coolly into their own pockets. Mischief, in fact, was their occupation, and to mean well to no man their chiefest harvest.

But let us throw a last glance upon the ruins which attest the passage of such enemies, and which move so many now to lamentations, as where the poet says,

"He ceased, and to the cloister's pensive scene
— shaped his solitary way."

The apologist for these institutions has often favourable hearers, to whom he can say with Cicero, "*Satis multa hominibus non iniquis hæc esse debent; nimis etiam multa vobis, quos æquissimos esse confidimus†.*" The lover of such ruins, it is true, when wishing to behold some trace of life amongst them, is driven to strange resources, as where the poet lately cited adds,

"Survey these walls, in fady texture clad,
Where wand'ring snails in many a slimy path,
Free, unconstrain'd, their various journeys crawl;
Peregrinations strange, and labyrinth
Confused, inextricable!"

Tracing the snail thus will not, however, satisfy all observers. An intelligent traveller in Spain is not contented, even though he find the buildings still without decay, as when the monks were first driven from them; for speaking of the Escorial, he says, "Now that the cloisters and courts are untenanted, these

* In Ver. act. ii. lib. i.

† Pro C. Rabirio.

long passages seem to lead to nothing ; and we miss the monk, fit inmate of the granite pile, stealing along as he was wont with noiseless tread and Zurbaran look." Nor can the well-kept grounds that indicate the rich proprietor, where once the monastery stood in wild and natural beauty, appear to all observers a sufficient substitute. "I went," says an ingenious writer, "to stay at a very grand and beautiful place in the country, where the grounds are said to be laid out with consummate taste. For the first three or four days I was perfectly enchanted ; it seemed something so much better than nature, that I really began to wish the earth had been laid out according to the latest principles of improvement, and that the whole face of nature wore a little more the appearance of a park. In three days' time I was tired to death ; a thistle, a nettle, a heap of dead bushes, any thing that wore the appearance of accident and want of attention, was quite a relief. I used to escape from the made grounds, and walk upon an adjacent goose-common,

"—— Overgrown with fern, and rough
With prickly gorse, that shapeless and deform'd,
And dangerous to the touch, has yet its bloom,
And decks itself with ornaments of gold,
Yields no unpleasing ramble—where the turf
Smells fresh, and rich in odorif'rous herbs
And fungous fruits of earth, regales the sense
With luxuries of unexpected sweets."

The cart-ruts, gravel-pits, irregularities, and all the varieties produced by neglect, were a thousand times more gratifying than the monotony of beauties, the result of design, and crowded into narrow confines with a luxuriance and abundance utterly unknown to nature." Still less can the interior refinement, the collections, and luxuries of the secular house offer adequate compensation for what is gone. Goethe, describing his visit to a monastery in Sicily, after having been to a certain rich man's villa on the preceding day, says, "We drove home with very different feelings from what we did yesterday. To-day we had to regret a noble institution which was falling with time ; while, on the other hand, a most tasteless undertaking had a constant supply of wealth for its support." Without leaving our own shores the same impressions are experienced by many ; for

" 'Tis not high power that makes a place divine,
Nor that the men from kings derive their line ;
But sacred thoughts, in holy bosoms stored,
Make people noble, and the place adored."

"Adieu, monasteries !" cries an illustrious pilgrim, whose words, I am convinced, will never make a very serious impression upon

the minds of many manufacturers and gentlemen of large landed property—"adieu, monasteries! at which I have thrown a glance in the valleys of the Sierra-Nevada and on the shores of Murcia. There at the sound of a bell, which will shortly sound no more, under falling cascades, amidst lauras without anachorites, sepulchres without voices, the dead without a remembrance—there in empty refectories, in meadows waste, where Bruno left his silence, Francis his sandals, Dominick his torch, Charles his crown, Ignatius his sword, Rance his hair-cloth, one grows accustomed to despise time and life; and if the reverie of passions should return, this solitude will lend them something which agrees well with the vanity of a dream."

While lamenting their fall, however, those who may be still attached to these institutions would not leave the present generation of their enemies hopeless or discouraged; they would find an excuse for their prejudices, they would think kindly of them, and furnish an instance of the resemblance between the sandal-tree imparting while it falls its aromatic flavour to the edge of the axe and the benevolent man who returns good for evil. There remains, therefore, the signal on this road formed by observing the impressions that central principles leave on the mind when contrasting the past with the present, and looking forward to the future destinies of the human race. Some, perhaps, who have pursued this road so far with us have been discouraged and repelled from proceeding through the direct and natural issues which it has yielded to the centre by three considerations, which they think ought to lead them in a contrary sense; for they cling to those doubts which are grounded on the existence of abuses, on the need of reform, and even on the necessity of change. No doubt many have thought that these last, as well as all former avenues, were blocked up and impassable to Catholicism, by meeting obstructions which only existed in their own imagination, misinformed and misdirected by guides more ignorant perhaps than they were themselves; they strike at useless shrubs that hinder not their prospect; or rather the briers and underwood are of their own creation; but their best friends would exclaim with Isabella, in the old tragedy—

"Down with these branches and these loathsome boughs;
Down with them, my comrade! rend them up,
And burn the roots from whence the rest is sprung.
We will not leave a root, a stalk, a tree,
A bough, a branch, a blossom, nor a leaf,
No, not an herb within this forest spot,
That can contribute to impede you."

Here the way will be cleared, so as to leave them without at least such difficulties, when we proceed to observe that Catho-

licism recognizes these facts as fully as they can do, and even accepts and sanctions in substance the conclusions at which they themselves arrive.

It is remarkable that no men describe with more minuteness, and condemn with more fervour, the abuses that have often crept into monastic life, than those who have themselves embraced that state. Dionysius the Carthusian was so impressed with a horror of abuses, that he says, "Probably the devil appeared to our Lord in the form of a religious man, like a monk or hermit, as we should now call him." In a certain hall of the monastery of St. Hubert, the demon is painted in the habit of a Carmelite. The monastic world, in fact, in the judgment of its own historians, resembles Athens in the character ascribed to it by Plutarch, as having produced the best honey and the best poison, the most just and the most wicked of men. The Church, without subscribing to all the passionate declamation of rigorists, seems to have had but one voice to condemn the real abuses of monachism, and to deplore the manifold evils that result from the wishes and conduct of such men as St. Gregory the Great and St. Bernard describe, seeking, under a religious habit, to change but not to leave vices—"mutare seculum non relinquere." Where are there not abuses? Catholicity on every road will show thee heaven; but if thou miss the path it guides thee in, thou wilt enforce it to share thy ruin, and pervert the ends of its eternity; which, if thou tread by its directions, it communicates and makes thee like itself. So it is in this particular state of life, which, with great candour, a Protestant author has lately defended against the charge of hypocrisy, when the failings of those who embrace it are proved. Whole orders, as well as individual members, have degenerated; and it is not Catholicism which inspires any one with a wish to conceal the fact. It is within the sanctuary itself that one hears complaints corresponding to what Dante heard in Paradise, as where we read,

"His family, that wont to trace his path,
Turn backward, and invert their steps; ere long
To rue the gathering in of their ill crop,
When the rejected tares in vain shall ask
Admittance to the barn *."

The Abbé de Rance, always extreme perhaps in his judgment, maintains that the whole history of the religious orders presents a series of moral revolutions, or periods of perfection, succeeded by periods of what he considered degeneracy. "St. Pachomius," he observes, "predicted the ruin of Tabenne, which

came soon after his death. Scethe, which began with St. Anthony, was already changed in the time of St. Arsenius. The sanctity of Sinai was past in the age of St. John Climachus, who lamented its fall. The Laura of St. Euthymus fell as soon as he was dead, and St. Sabas was obliged to leave it. The great Benedictin order became changed in the second century of its institution, as did the order of Grandmont forty years after the death of its founder. Scarcely was St. Bernard dead when the Cistercians evinced symptoms of the abuses which so soon succeeded, and which drew on them the reproaches of Alexander III. The order of St. Francis was changed soon after its foundation by the ambition of Brother Helie. The Carmelites of St. Joseph of Avila were only preserved by the presence of St. Theresa. A monastery," continues this abbot, "is an ark of safety for a certain number of persons. The Almighty conducts and protects it as long as it serves to his designs, but when his work is done, and the passengers have gained the port, He departs if there be neglect; and then this fragile bark, abandoned to itself in the tempest without a helm, is tossed here and there by the violence of vices and passions, as if by tempests and waves; it is dashed to pieces, and in fine swallowed up in the universal wreck of human things *."

Catholicism admits, therefore, all that persons observing the history of monasteries from their point of view at a distance from without would have admitted, only it will not conclude that the past is worthless as far as yielding direction to the centre. "You say," observes a great living writer, "that monastic orders were failures because they grew corrupt. Well, so was primitive Christianity then. In your sense Christianity itself has been a failure; for how much less has it touched and healingly troubled the deep fountains of human depravity than might have been expected! No," he continues, "God's providences appear to be thwarted by man's prevarication, and the merciful intentions of Heaven to fall short of the mark at which they are aimed. I see nothing in the objection that monastic orders have been failures, which will not equally apply to Christianity itself. But, after all, in what sense have they been failures?" It is clear, moreover, from the view of a monastic life taken by its most fervent advocates, that Catholicism recognizes also, in the second place, the continual need of a judicious and watchful scrutiny in regard to the manner in which religious communities are conducted. In every age the Catholic religion has been employed in reforming either particular monasteries or whole orders. The holy see, general councils, provincial synods, mo-

* De la Sainteté et des Devoirs de la Vie monastique, chap. xxii.

nastic chapters, abbatial decrees—all have been exerted in furtherance of this object. When by reason of the commendatory priors abuses and degeneracy prevailed in the order of Grandmont, the Abbot Regald, in 1625, desiring to reform it, assembled some of his monks, with certain fathers of the society of Jesus, as also of the order of St. Francis, and in conformity with their advice drew up twelve chapters of constitutions*. It was in this manner generally that the investigation and reform were carried on. Sometimes even laymen exerted their influence to accomplish this end. Thus among the epistles of Fulbert, we find one from the duke of Aquitaine, written to a venerable abbot, saying, "This second time I implore you to send to the Carotic monastery some of your monks who are fervent in observing the rule of St. Benedict, whose holy conversation may be an example to them. I pray you to send as many as ten monks from your monastery†."

Catholicism, however, in admitting the need for reform, and in making provision for it, takes care, we are assured, to distinguish reform from destruction. It says with the historian of the Benedictines, "*Malos monachos in bonos convertere laudabile et sanctum est; sed canonicos facere non est emendare. Nunquam erit bonus canonicus monachus malus. Bonus autem non exuet ordinem suum‡.*" "That in the fury and convulsions of parties," as Balmes observes, "a frantic and sacrilegious hand, excited by secret perversity, should cast an incendiary torch into a peaceful dwelling, is conceivable; but to attack the essence of the religious institution, with a view to confine it within the narrowness and imbecility of a little mind, and to strip it of its noble titles, cannot be admitted by either the understanding or the heart. A false philosophy, which withers whatever it touches, may undertake this insane task; but, independent of religion, letters and arts will rise up against such a pretension; for they have need of ancient remembrances; they draw all their wonders from elevated thoughts, from grand and austere pictures, from profound and tender sentiments; they transport the human mind into regions of light, guiding the imagination by unknown paths, and reigning over the heart by inexplicable enchantments."

In fine, what will, perhaps, still more surprise some inquirers, Catholicism, as far as a common observer may be allowed to express his impressions, seems to make advances towards the most fervent opponents of the monastic institutions, and to admit with them the necessity at times of not alone reform, but in

* Levesque, An. Grand. vi.

† Fulberti Carnotensis, cxvii.

‡ Yepes ii. 151.

general of change, as if recognizing the truth of what an old English poet says, "Change hath her periods, and is natural." It is not from the centre that emanates a resolve to rest in a dead and immutable routine—cultivating the mind of the past in whatever form, whether of literature, of art, or of institutions, that mind is inscribed without any regard to the present or the future. Absolute decisions of this kind are to be expected from such persons as an ingenious author describes, speaking of "a lady of respectable opinions and very ordinary talents, defending what is right without judgment, and believing what is holy without charity;" but they seem by no means to argue a mind that is catholically informed and inspired.

The religious orders seem to have always formed or possessed men who, while venerating the past, invoked a scientific, social, and political progress; and I believe it will be difficult to discover in the whole of the ancient monastic literature a single line to throw discredit upon any attempts to promote, in any of these relations, the happiness of mankind. If they respected custom, and were not for abating all former precedents, all trivial, fond records, the whole frame and fabric of society as a nuisance; if their wisdom was not always at the horizon, as Hazlitt says, "ready to give a cordial welcome to any thing new, any thing remote, any thing questionable, and that, too, in proportion as the object was new, impracticable, or not desirable—they were not like the credulous alarmists, who shudder at the idea of altering any thing. No! where do you find them teaching man to turn his back always upon the future and his face to the past, as if mankind were stationary, and were to act from the obsolete inferences of past periods, and not from the living impulse of existing circumstances, and the consolidated force of the knowledge and reflection of ages up to the present instant, naturally projecting them forward into the future, and not driving them back upon the past?" No sooner was any discovery within the order of things subject to invention announced, than we find monks among the very first to welcome and admire it, while many of them were themselves the first to produce it, having devoted their lives to the improvement of mathematical instruments, of agriculture, of architecture, of laws, of institutions, and of manners. Wherever any advance seemed possible towards truth of any description, or towards a less imperfect state of civilization, they seemed to hail it with enthusiasm; and in this respect it would be hard to point out what limits they were for imposing either on others or on themselves. Moreover, there seems to be nothing to lead any one to suppose that Catholicism in general, either in regard to monasteries or to any thing but truth itself, which is unchangeable, declares any war with time. The monks themselves, inspired by it, might

provisions lose their applicability, their expediency, and their object. It has been said, with some degree of truth, that "each age must write its own works, or each generation for the next succeeding." To affirm, indeed, that even such men as St. Bernard always wrote precisely as they would think it necessary to write now, appears to argue singular courage. To use the words of our great English philosopher, we may say that "their instructions were such as the characters and circumstances of their readers made proper." But whatever we may think of the books, it seems an experimental certainty that in material foundations some changes or modifications of things are required from time to time, and that all the forms belonging to institutions of an older period may not prove suitable to the circumstances or times that succeed. Even the Abbé de Rance admits that the order of Cluny, after departing in some degree from the exact observance of the rule, was favoured with eminent graces. Catholicism, as well as philosophy, seems to call on us to behold the day of all past great worthies here. In the aspect of nature, in the sighing of these woods, in the beauty of these fields, in the breeze that sings out of these mountains, in the workmen, the boys, the maidens you meet—in the hopes of the morning, the weariness of noon, and the calm of evening,—in all of these, I say, it seems to call on us to behold the past combined with the present and the future,—it seems to call on us not to cling to the stiff dead details of the irrevocable past, but, as a great author says, to consult with living wisdom the enveloping Now; and it, too, seems to assure us that the more we inspect the evanescent beauties of this "now," of its wonderful details, its spiritual causes, and its astounding whole, so much the more we shall catch the spirit of the past, and cultivate the mind of the past, which was great, not through archæological imitations, but through living wisdom and living justice.

Thus, to continue using even the words of an eloquent representative of modern views, "is justice done to each generation and individual,"—Catholicism with wisdom teaching man that he shall not hate, or fear, or mimic his ancestors; that he shall not bewail himself as if the world were old, and thought were spent, and he were born into the dotage of things; for by virtue of the Deity, Catholicism renews itself inexhaustibly every day, and the thing whereon it shines, though it were dust and sand, is a new subject with countless relations. "As far as is lawful, and even farther, I am indignant," says the Venerable Bede, "whenever I am asked by the rustics how many years yet the world will last. On the contrary, I demand of them how they know that we are in the last age of the world? since our Lord did not say whether his advent was near or remote,

but merely ordered us to be ready. Some thought that the world would have seven ages, but St. Augustin reproved them, saying, if after seven thousand years that day would come, every man might easily know the time by simply counting years. How then explain the text, 'Quod nec Filius hoc novit * ?' So far from sanctioning the lamentations of those who are exclusive admirers of former times, Catholicism does not want to recall the past; it wishes to create the future, which has always been the object of its mission.

Doubtless not to tolerate the existence of monasteries, of associations for a holy object, of houses of peace, and order, and sanctity, which are, as we have seen, nearly coeval with Christianity, would be the same thing as not to tolerate the Catholic religion; or to profess to tolerate monasteries, and to subject them to laws which contradict the object, and means, and poetry of their existence, would be to add hypocrisy, and injustice, and even illegality, to oppression; since, according to the maxim of the Pandects, "*Quando lex aliquid concedit, concedere videtur et id sine quo res ipsa esse non potest.*" Doubtless to seek a progressive development of social happiness or of the faculties of man by abolishing such institutions, from thinking that they can account for the present state of Italy, for example, would be flying in the face of historical facts; since, as the admirable author of Tancred remarks, three centuries ago, when all these influences of Catholicity were much more powerful, Italy was the soul of Europe. Doubtless, too, whatever may be the modifications or the changes which time may bring about in the circumstances of Christian institutions, the monastery, under some form and with some limitations or other, will continue to exist, since its foundations may be truly said to rest on the holy mountains—"fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis." Eliminate all such visible traces of the fountain-head of theology, and of the thought of the eternal years, and then, as a great writer says, with a different allusion, all things go to decay; genius leaves the temple to haunt the senate, or the market; literature becomes frivolous; science is cold; the eye of youth is not lighted by the hope of other worlds; the virtues of its soul decline—cheerfulness, susceptibility of simple pleasures, energy of will, inviolable faith in friendship, cordial affection for others, frankness,—every thing of that sort gives way and perishes. No holy thought in all that heart. Nothing but wandering frailties, wild as the wind, and blind as death or ignorance, inhabit there. Then, too, all things else participate in the change. Men only laugh at nature's "holy countenance;" old age is without honour; society lives to trifles; and when men die, no one ever

after mentions them. Accordingly, if you look around, you may be able, perhaps, to observe what an English statesman now terms the growing melancholy of enlightened Europe; and in its destruction of what it had inherited from the elder world may be discerned the cause of its discontent and its perplexity. Its wisest heads may therefore cast a sorrowful look back upon the celestial privileges and wonderful prerogatives disclosed in the pages of its past history. But Catholicism, for all that, we are assured, is tied down to no Procrustean bed, nor left inextricably dependent on the permanence of things that belong more to antiquarian studies than to religion. "I have never disputed," says one of its most eloquent admirers, "about either names or habits; but I say that we have need of friendly against hostile associations." "There is no end," says a great writer, "to which your practical faculty can aim, so sacred or so large, that if pursued for itself will not at last become carrion and an offence. The imaginative faculty of the soul must be fed with objects immense and eternal—the end must be one inapprehensible to the senses, then will it be deifying." This, after all, and not the exterior form, not the building, or the habit, or the name, or the letter of the rule, is what constitutes the attraction of the monastic life, the ideal of which is every where as an eternal desire; and how wonderful is its charm! Truly, for the whole world it is a mountain air; it is the embalmer of the common and universal atmosphere. Respecting this essential and truly central foundation, Catholicism, we may be sure, will stand ever firm; but for the rest, no doubt it will prove what it has always been in every preceding age—namely, like nature itself, yielding, and endowed with infinite powers of modification and self-adjustment; saying, when invited to play the orator, "What our destinies have ruled out in their books we must not search, but kneel to." In that magnificent vision which Socrates describes at the end of the Republic, he says that Lachesis sung the past, Clotho the present, and Atropos the future*. Catholicism confines no one to the past, however they may admire its peculiar attribute. It inspires men with a love for what is good present around them, and with hope and contentment when they contemplate what may be in store for their posterity. We know not what will come, yet let us be the prophets of love. As the face of the earth changes with the seasons, so does Catholicism's advancing spirit "create its ornaments along its path, and carry with it the beauty that it visits; drawing around its way charming faces and warm hearts, and wise discourse, and heroic actions." It seems to have much less at heart the immutability of dresses, of styles of architecture, or of rules to

govern an order, than the progress of love, "the one remedy for all ills, the panacea of nature." There appears every reason to feel assured that it would meet, not coldly speculate on, the tendency of our age to extol kindness, and to denounce every thing contrary to it—distrust, selfishness, and oppression; that it would encourage, not discountenance, the hope of a happier period, when love would be more powerful on earth; when the higher and lower classes would be more united in feelings, sentiments, affections; when all might have avowed friends in a class of society different from their own; that it would sanction our hope that perhaps we shall attain to this state of things some day; that the good time is not past, but coming. Before this morn may on the world arise, charity, which becks our ready minds to fellowship divine, mildness, obedience, the three things most insisted on in the New Testament, are the things which it pronounces to be at the bottom of all perfection—the object of all the precepts and of all the counsels. It seems to repeat, as from its own knowledge, what is said around it now with emphasis, that "so much benevolence as a man hath, so much life hath he." Behold the clear religion of Heaven! This appears to be what it has always taught; this is what it seems aware has been pronounced from on high in the apostolic definition of pure religion; and happily for the consolation, and edification, and direction of the human race, it appears to acknowledge no other test of its own vitality in any heart. Where, then, do you find impervious thickets now remaining near this road to prevent you from advancing to it? Or do you ask what is written on this last directing board? Read it yourself, by looking at the men of every banner opposed to Catholicism, when called upon to reform, or modify, or change what they had chosen or wished to blazon upon their own. Read it by comparing and judging on what side is the quiet confidence, the spirit of large concession, the desire to conciliate by giving up all that can be given up; in other words, the moderation and charity that only Truth inspires.

CHAPTER V.

THE ROAD OF OLD AGE.



TREAKS of golden light seen through distant openings in the foliage, and a certain cooler and less confined air under the trees around us, indicate that we are getting near the western extremity of this great forest, through which, from its eastern corner, we have been so long journeying.

“Still round the centre circling, so our path
Has led us, that toward the sunset now
Direct we travel.”

Lifting both hands against our front, we interpose them as a screen that may protect our vision from such gorgeous superflux of light. The leafy labyrinth, where in general from year to year the eagle and the crow see no intruder—the noon-day darkness—the deep, unbroken echoes—all that is past. We are in the purlieus of the wood, and the richly-glowing sky that pierces at intervals amidst the leaves gives note of day's departure, and of the approaching termination of these forest wanderings, symbolical of our course through life; for old age, as the ancients said, is like the sunset peeping into a wood and showing light, towards which we walk through winding alleys. Empedocles called it *ἰστέραν βίον*, and Aristotle, *ὄσπας βίον**, which expression Plato adopts in his laws, saying *ἡμεῖς δ' ἐν ὄσπας τοῦ βίου*. We set out, like the Tuscan painter, Cristofano Gherardi, in one of his great compositions significant of the seven ages of man, with the story of infancy; and then we saw, as it were, nurses holding children in their arms. Boyhood and youth next followed, with all the attributes of those who are on those smiling roads. Manhood introduced us to a variety of graver topics, from social and political interests, from magistracy and war, from thrones and altars, from sins and sufferings, to the moral and religious differences that exist in the world. We touched on policy and religion, earthly ambition, and holy penitence; and

now the Road of Age receives us, leading us to the last of all the journeys in which we wear these habiliments of mortality.

The road before us winds through ancient trees, where the oak and fir seem to be less living columnus than the ruins of the trees of another period of the world, the pines being bearded with hoary moss, yet touched with grace by the violets at their feet. Huge rocks peep out from the deep beds of withered leaves that lie beneath the oaks. The title of the road seems to have taken all courage from the poet, who probably was not prepared for the smiling scenes which it unfolds farther on, and who describes this place, mournfully relating how he went

“Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
Of the wild babbling rivulet, and how
The forest’s solemn canopies were changed
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
The struggling brook: tall spires of windlestrae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines,
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly; for, as past years flew away,
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white; and where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs: so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves.”

Nevertheless, dear companion, we need not turn away down-hearted at the prospect of what is awaiting us. Come, who does not like the evening side of the forest, the road that is lighted by the setting sun? Who does not feel the charm of its golden hues? Are they not as beautiful as those of the morning? Well, then, let us take courage, and perhaps somewhat analogous to these agreeable impressions will be experienced here. “There is an ethical character,” says a great writer, “which so penetrates the bone and marrow of nature as to seem the end for which it was made. All the facts in natural history, taken by themselves, are barren like a single sex. But marry it to human history, and it is full of life. Linnæus and Buffon’s volumes are only catalogues of facts; but the most trivial of these facts, applied to the illustration of a fact in intellectual philosophy, or in any way associated to human nature, affects us in the most lively manner.” The observations which are suggested when entering upon the present road supply an instance, for on all sides here we can see how close is the analogy between the necessities of trees and men.

"Arboribus sua nec deest importuna senectus,
Fronde caput nudans, et arans in cortice rugas *."

What force of vegetable life within the forest! When the soil is favourable, the copse-woods, after being cut, are nearly impenetrable at the end of three or four years; and then what a prodigious dimension do some trees attain! Strabo speaks of a tree in India that could shelter fifty horsemen†; and Pliny relates that Tiberius caused to be carried to Rome a beam of larch-wood two feet square from end to end, and a hundred and twenty feet in length, which Nero employed in his amphitheatre. Again, trees, like individual men, and whole forests, like some nations, attain to a great age without any apparent diminution of force or grandeur. A forest may perhaps present to us a monument of more than a thousand years' standing. But every thing has a term in nature. The most vigorous tree and best situated arrives in fine at old age, and from age it passes to decrepitude. It is in the centre that it begins to alter; but one can recognize the change by observing that the top branches partly die, that the tree grows round, less thick, and that its leaves turn yellow sooner. There is a change, too, in that smooth united bark of one colour which denotes the vigour of a tree; the branches no longer shoot from the top, and the green leaves fade before the end of autumn‡. As with men too, so it is with trees in regard to longevity, some arriving at maturity and old age earlier than others. The wild rose-tree is in full maturity at ten years of age, the elder at fifteen, the wild cherry-tree at twenty-five, the white poplar at thirty, the service-tree of fowlers, sorbus aucuparia, as also the birch, at forty; the alder, betula alnus, as also the sycamore, at fifty; the larch and ash at seventy. The lime, the wild apple, the wild pear-tree, and the small-leaved elm, ulmus campestris, are of mature age after a hundred years. The common fir, pinus abies, and the beech, do not arrive at it till a hundred and twenty. The wild pine and the common charm, or yoke-elm, carpinus betulus, are mature in a hundred and forty years; but the oak, quercus robur, does not arrive at full maturity till the age of two hundred and fifty years§. Warm and cold climates have more influence on the duration of plants than on the age of men. In some few instances plants that are annual in cold climates actually become perennial when transplanted into warm regions, and the contrary takes place when they are removed from warm to cold ones. Man, however, cannot by any influence of climate effect such changes in himself.

* Vanierii Praed. Rust. lib. vi.

† Lib. xv.

‡ Varenne-Fenille, Mém. sur l'Administ. forestière.

§ Burgsdorf, Manuel forestier.

The lives of some individual trees are protracted to a prodigious space. Pliny cites as instances a certain lotus-tree, "whose roots," he says, "reached to the forum, the ilex on the Vatican, the Delphic plane sown by Agamemnon, the trees at the sepulchre of Protesilaus, the two oaks sown by Hercules in Pontus, the olives at Athens, and the oleaster of Olympia, from which Hercules was crowned *." Indeed the cypress, cedar, ebony, lotus, box, yew, juniper, oleaster, and olive, seem to admit of no decay; and in general," he says, "those trees which excel in odour approach nearest to an eternal duration †." The cedar of Lebanon certainly seems proof against time itself. The timber in the temple of Apollo, at Utica, was found undecayed after the lapse of two thousand years. The very aspect of the cedar impresses one with the idea of its comparative immortality. "The fir-trees," says the sacred text, "are not like his boughs, nor the chesnut-tree like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God like unto him in beauty." There is a cedar on one of the mountains of Calaveras, in California, which, if its age can be estimated by its zones, must be 2520 years old. The bark is fourteen inches thick at the base. The duration of the mulberry-wood, if the accounts from Nineveh be exact, resembles what is fabulous. Nevertheless, the cypress is said to be the longest-lived of all trees, not excepting the cedar. It is planted over graves and carried in funeral processions as an emblem of immortality; for the durability of its wood, too, it is phenomenal. The cypress doors of St. Peter's Church, at Rome, showed no signs of decay when, after the lapse of one thousand one hundred years, Pope Eugenius IV. took them down to replace them by gates of brass. "The cypress, that most venerable of trees, when it is old and well grown, affords," says Goethe, "matter enough for thought." Of all large British trees, however, the oak is the most remarkable for its longevity. Again, the circumstances resulting from years are in trees, as in men, generally fixed by certain laws of nature. The beech, which takes from seventy to a hundred years in attaining maturity, remains in its beauty and perfection about the same period; after which it falls rapidly to decay. The cedar of Lebanon is thought to remain sound for one or two thousand years. The sweet chesnut makes rapid growth in youth; but already at the age of fifty or sixty years, the timber loses its firmness, and begins to get shaky at heart, though it will live for several centuries after the heart has become what is called ring-shaken. This tree is at its perfection in about forty years. The Weymouth pine, in the north of England or in Scotland, generally decays before it has reached its fiftieth year.

Proceeding on the road, casting our eyes from side to side, we

* Nat. Hist. xvi. 88.

† xvi. 79.

can perceive that here are many trees in the decline of life, while of several majestic sires the age is unknown. In the New Forest was a yew standing in 1836, which probably dated its birth before the time when the Romans or Christianity drove the Druids from the forest shade. Many old, decrepit yews are at the monastery of St. Baume, in Provence, of which the monks retained traditions. A monk measured one of these yews when he was a young man, and again after fifty years he measured it, and the little progress that this tree had made convinced him that these trees were as old as the time of St. Magdalen, having within fifty years increased only a thirty-fifth part of its diameter. Varenne-Fenille, however, doubts in general the age of the yew, and says that its heart decays after two hundred years. But it is the common opinion that of all European trees the yew attains to the greatest age. Decandolle assigns to that of Braborne, in Kent, thirty centuries; to that of Fortingal, from twenty-five to twenty-six; and to those of Crowhurst, in Surrey, and Ripon, in Yorkshire, fourteen and a half and twelve centuries. Endlicher says that the age of a yew-tree at Grasford, in North Wales, is estimated at one thousand four hundred years, and that of another in Derbyshire at two thousand and ninety-six years. The chesnut near Aci, at the east of Mount Etna, and at the extremity of the inhabited region, is called the chesnut of a hundred horses, for the reason that, according to tradition, a queen of Sicily, during a storm, took shelter under it with a hundred horsemen in her suite. The trunk was a hundred and sixty feet in circumference, wholly hollow, and vegetating only by means of the bark. There are many French scientific works which treat on the old age of trees. Great botanists consider it not improbable that the age of several individual trees which are still alive goes back to the earliest historical periods, if not of Egypt, at least of Greece and Italy. On an island in the river of Nerbudda, there is a banyan or Indian fig-tree which is believed to be the same that existed at the time of Alexander the Great, and which, according to Nearchus, was then capable of overshadowing ten thousand men. Parts of it have been carried away by floods, but the circumference of only its principal trunk is two thousand feet. The dragon-trees and monkey bread-trees are among the largest and oldest inhabitants of our planet. Adanson and Perottet assign to some of the latter measured by them an age which would make them contemporaneous with the epoch of the building of the pyramids. Addison found a tree, the boabab growing near the Senegal, in Africa, which, reckoning from the ascertained age of others of the same species, must have been nearly four thousand years old. The oldest oak in Europe, as also the largest, is that near Saintes, on the road to Cozes. In the dead part there is a room with a door and a window, the

sides of which are clothed with fern and lichens. It is supposed to be between one thousand eight hundred and two thousand years old. The wild rose-tree of the crypt of the cathedral of Hilderheim is said to be a thousand years old.

But enough of these woodman's details. They lead us naturally to a contemplation of old age in men, from which our road derives its title, and dispose us to think of it perhaps without complaints, since they show us that nature cannot be expected for any class of creatures to be always tricked in holiday attire, the forest tree itself saying as much in its altered appearance, "the same spot beneath it which once breathed perfume and glittered as for the frolic of the nymphs," being now, as we perceive, overspread with so grave a livery. All must obey Time, and man finds a fellow-subject in the aged tree, which the poet addresses in these beautiful lines :

"Time made thee what thou wast—king of the woods!
And Time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in! Once thy spreading boughs
O'erhung the champaign, and the numerous flock
That graz'd it stood beneath that ample cope,
Uncrowded, yet safe sheltered from the storm!
No flock frequents thee now; thou hast outlived
Thy popularity, and art become
(Unless verse rescue thee awhile) a thing
Forgotten, as the foliage of thy youth!"

Homer seems to think that it is only when visited with misfortunes that men grow old quickly:

Αἶψα γὰρ ἐν κακότητι βροτοὶ καταγνῆσκεισιν *.

But Plato says that old age arrives soon for every one. "Can a short space," he asks, "be called great? The interval which separates our childhood and old age is very small. Think you," he adds, "that an immortal being ought to confine its cares to so short a time, instead of extending them to eternity†?" "In the heyday of life we eye the farthest verge of the horizon," says Hazlitt, "and think what a way we shall have to look back upon ere we arrive at our journey's end; and without our in the least suspecting it, the mists of age are at our feet, the two divisions of our lives have melted into each other, with none of that romantic interval stretching out between them that we had reckoned upon." This road, however, might remind one of ascending through an alpine forest: at first childhood presents, as it were, the flowers and blossoms of the sunny valley; then youth succeeding, the ground rises, and is covered with vines and gardens, the heat producing every rich, luxuriant fruit. Further

on manhood introduces you to the forest of elcsnuts and oaks ; the notes of the turtle-dove are heard, and the whole exuberant family of trees meets you in all the perfect development of their several natures. But now the forest changes, for only the darker firs and pines are found. Nothing is heard but the whispering of mountain winds and the fall of waters ; the trees grow smaller and thinner,—you emerge upon the grassy alp. There is the sun—there are even flowers, but they grow near patches of snow—the air is keen—before you are only naked rocks—the clouds are gathering around you. A little further on you come to the bare rock, the silent summits, the perpetual snow—the symbol of eternity. Such seems to be the gradual ascents of life ; for the last stage has its pleasures, like those yielded by that mountain top, where the air you breathe inspires cheerfulness ; where you find sweetness in the solitude, a certain delight in the nakedness and repose around you ; where, in fine, you are nearer heaven.

But now comes the question, are there issues and directing signals still left for these belated wanderers to conduct and guide them to the centre from which they have hitherto perhaps been trying to escape? Yes, we shall find that there are ; for from the present road, through two spacious and majestic avenues, the central truth can be discerned, the first being formed by the fact that Catholicism provides for the wants and accommodates itself to the views, retractions, and circumstances of old age, delivering men in great part from its vices and miseries ; and the second by the natural affinity between old age and Catholicism, or by the fact that age of itself exercises an influence in reducing the character to a certain conformity with what that order of life seems to require.

Let us, then, observe at first how central principles deliver old age in great part from the vices to which that period of existence is liable. As yet we know not what this road may prove, but certainly at the first steps along it there are objects seen which are not agreeable. As we proceed we shall have more encouragement ; but, as a prologue to the scene prepared for us, we may begin by admitting that all decaying things have an unpleasant side, whatever the admirers of ruins affirm. A poet finds an image to express this sense in mere works of ancient art in a royal forest, saying,

“ The fountain was a-dry,—neglect and time
Had marr'd the work of artisan and mason,
And efts and croaking frogs, begot of slime,
Sprawl'd in the ruin'd bason.
The statue, fallen from its marble base,
Amidst the refuse leaves and herbage rotten,

Lay like the idol of some bygone race,
Its name and rites forgotten *."

The first observations, then, are not exhilarating, since it is necessary to cast a glance at what is essentially defective and symptomatic of decay. Truly youth is beautiful even in trees; whereas these poor, bent, decrepit, gnarled, distorted, weather-beaten old elms, with only one vast arm perhaps hideously overbalancing, and giving in consequence to the whole an unsymmetrical form, are but a sorry sight; and if we could look within the bark it is still worse: there the ruin is even greater. Alas! it is too often so with the human plant. It is not, unfortunately, the exterior of men, as of trees, that loses beauty by the lapse of years; with both there is often a decay that is not seen, which is far worse. The individual maximum in the growth of trees is prolonged to the time when the heart of the tree begins to alter. It is the same sometimes with the virtue of men.

"L'âme en vivant s'altère ;—
A force de marcher l'homme erre, l'esprit doute,
Tous laissent quelque chose aux buissons de la route,
Les troupeaux leur toison, et l'homme sa vertu!"

The saint agrees with the poet. "Let us be assured, dearest brethren," said Faustus, abbot of Lerins, "that unless we take care, unless we daily prune and keep down our passions, the longer we live in this world, the worse we shall become †." The remark is as old as any moral observation made by men, and the well-known passage of Aristotle is sufficient to prove its justice ‡. It was a Greek proverb,

Νεκρὸν λατρεύειν καὶ γέροντα νοθεύειν ταῦτόν ἐστι.

Juvenal says of a bad habit,

" — Agro in corde senescit §."

"How many are there of these evil companions! Irascible with age," says Sophocles, "angered by the least thing.

— ἀνὴρ δύσσοργος, ἐν γῆρα βαρὺς,
— πρὸς οὐδέν ἐστι θυμούμενος ||.

They come to deserve a by-name, such as was given to Niccolo, the Florentine sculptor, who was called 'Tribolo,' a thistle, a tormentor." "Age I should reverence," says Melantius, "if it were temperate; but testy years are most contemptible." "I know," says another ancient poet, "the character of these old men, who only know how to condemn."

* Hood. † Faust, Ab. Lirinens, Serm. ad Monach. 1.
‡ De Rhet. § vii. || Soph. Ajax, 1017.

τῶν τ' αὖ γερόντων οἶδα τὰς ψυχὰς, ὅτι
οὐδὲν βλέπουσιν ἄλλο, πλὴν ψήφῳ δακεῖν*.

"One might suppose," he says, "that the Delphian god had predicted to them as to Philocleon, that they should die whenever they suffered an accused person to escape from their hands†." No wonder, then, that such observers, after eulogizing youth, should add, with Euripides, "but sad and cruel old age I hate‡." "Their blood is cold," says the poet of the Augustan era; "they are insensible to praise and glory."

"—— Non laudis amor, nec gloria cessit
Pulsa metu; sed enim gelidus tardante senecta
Sanguis hebet, frigetque effæto in corpore vires §."

There is no cessation of these accusations in modern times among those who watch the old. Only hear them:

"Austere, atrocious! the old human friends
With one foot in the grave, with dim eyes, strange
To tears save drops of dotage, with long white
And scanty hairs, and shaking hands, and heads
As palsied as their hearts are hard, they counsel,
Cabal, and put men's lives out, as if life
Were no more than the feelings long extinguish'd
In their relentless bosoms."

Then, elsewhere addressing them, the same observer says,

"It doth avail not that I weep for ye,—
Ye cannot change, since ye are old and grey,
And ye have chosen your own lot.—Your fame must be
A book of blood, whence in a milder day
Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapt in clay."

This is extreme blame, you say; but how many unimpassioned witnesses still attest "the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them!" saying,

"——— These old fellows
Have their ingratitude in them hereditary:
Their blood is cak'd, 'tis cold, it seldom flows;
'Tis lack of kindly warmth, they are not kind."

"An old man," says Pope Innocent III., "is easily provoked, with difficulty appeased; he is tenacious and cupidinous, sad and querulous, swift to speak and slow to hear||." How many have their tales of some domestic misery arising from the vices of the old playing the tyrant on a little scale! how many can tell us of the dwelling wherein some miserly wretch,

* Achar. 375. † Aristop. Vesp. ‡ Herc. Furens, 639.
§ v. 394. || D. Inn. Pap. III., De Contemptu Mundi, c. ix.

"A cancred, crabb'd carle does dwell
That has no skill of court nor courtesie,
Ne cares of what men say of him, ill or well!"

There is still to be found the man like Camillus at Ardea, "*quum diis hominibusque accusandis senesceret* *." "As men advance in life," says the author of Henrietta Temple, "all passions resolve themselves into money. Love, ambition, even poetry, end in this." Oh, what a deformed gipsy is this Mammon, whom such old men have for their mistress! Would you see their favourite dwelling? It is "one of those gloomy-looking places in which this execrable hag loves to enshrine herself. The exterior has not been painted for years, and the massive iron shutters are coated with rust. It looks like a money-getting place—it is so dark and cheerless. If, during the morning, a vagrant sunbeam by chance penetrates through the closely grated, dusty windows, it quickly withdraws again, like some unwelcome guest, chilled by the coldness of the reception it has met with."

Then, again, the vanity of old age is complained of. "*Adhuc enim,*" says Seneca, "*non pueritia in nobis, sed quod gravius habemus senem, vitia puerorum, nec puerorum tantum, sed infantium* †." Antonio de Guevara contrives to be facetious even on this melancholy subject, writing to one who, like the wolf, is grey before he is good; for, addressing Don Alphonso Espinel, lieutenant-general of Oviedo, he rallies him on his vices in the following manner: "Magnificent lord and honourable old man, since you are past seventy and I am not far from sixty, it seems to me that it will not be bad advice or any extravagant solicitude, if we shou'd both of us begin to put in practice our late good resolutions. This year, when you were laid up with the gout, when I went to see you, you asked me to note down some of the privileges that ought to belong to old men, which question of a truth you should have addressed to some one wiser and older than myself. However, on condition that you will not be angry or in the least annoyed, I will comply with your request, protesting, however, a thousand times that my intention is not to give licence to my pen to malign the grave and honourable, by whose prudence republics are governed, and from whom youth learns wisdom, for that would be sacrilege; but I mean only to describe men like myself, who am but a vagabond. Some have written in praise of old age. Well, God give them more rest than they have had sense, for we see that it is in truth an evil disease. I will note down here, then, some of their privileges, but to mark all would be impossible.

* Lib. v. 43.

† Epist. iv.

It is a privilege, then, of old men to have their finger often in their ear, and to fancy, whenever persons speak together words which they hear not, that it is to the prejudice of their honour or of their goods. It is their privilege to have clouds in their eye when there are none in the sky, and not to recognize their friend. It is their privilege also to talk of their former passions. It is their privilege to ask, the first thing in the morning, what weather it is, and whether there is a change of moon ; for by dint of infirmities they become astrologers. It is their privilege also to ask every minute which way the vane turns. It is their privilege to seek company, either in the market or in some shop, to know what passes in the fields or in the town, and to ask what news at court, though the worst is, they never can remember a word of it. It is their privilege to be always full of suspicion and anger against their servants, saying that they do nothing right, and to carry a stick to stir the fire and to threaten their varlets withal. Item, it is one of their privileges, at least once a month, to shut themselves up in their room or closet and count their silver, putting on one side the double ducats, on the other the ecus, on the other the crowns, and never to change a single piece. It is also their privilege to have a good feather bed, to wear fur and gloves, and to have their bed warmed, though the misfortune is, after all, they will do nothing all night but cough and complain. It is also their privilege to find nothing fit to eat, to repeat continually that they have not slept all night, and at the first streaks of day to be able to begin grumbling and scolding every one, and to ask for breakfast. It is their privilege, in fine, to love authority, and yet to hate those who ask their age, though they wish to be honoured on account of their years *." The poet, after similar observations, speaks plainer than the friar. "You may have been once all that you pretend," he says,

"But now contempt is mocking thy grey hairs ;
Thou art descending to the darksome grave
Unhonoured and unpitied."

Generalizing, however, far too much, while ascribing to all the miseries that belong through their own fault but to a few, he continues,

"———— Here, in this mirror
Let man behold the circuit of his fortunes :
The season of the spring dawns like the morning,
Bedewing childhood with unrelish'd beauties
Of gaudy sights ; the summer, as the noon,
Shines in delight of youth, and ripens strength

To autumn's manhood ; here the evening grows
 And knits up all felicity in folly.
 Winter at last draws on, the night of age ;
 Yet still a humour of some novel fancy
 Untasted or untried puts off the minute
 Of resolution, which should bid farewell
 To a vain world of weariness and sorrows."

In order to find the opening through which men, by desiring to correct the vices and miseries incident to old age, can discern the advantage of central principles, it is by no means necessary that we should have any wish to exaggerate the consequence of their influence. It only requires an admission, involving no difficulty, that the faults peculiarly incident to age are precisely those with which Catholicity most resolutely and effectually grapples ; and of course, along with this admission, there will be required a calm and unprejudiced observation of facts.

"Rich poverty," says the Baron de Prelle, "that is, detachment and humility with riches, constitutes a great pleasure for the old, when they are rich without loving riches*." Now every one knows that to produce this detachment is one of the prime objects of Catholicism. That it succeeds frequently is evident ; and from what a besetting sin of old age, then, does this condition, resulting from central views, proclaim a deliverance ! Strabo mentions a saying of Phalereus, that in the Attic mines the diggers worked with as much heart as if they expected to dig up Plutus himself†. An old man may not be naturally apt for such labours, but if no benign influence affect him, he may be often described in the lines of the humorous poet,

"He had roll'd in money like pigs in mud,
 Till it seem'd to have enter'd into his blood
 By some occult projection ;
 And his cheeks, instead of a healthy hue,
 As yellow as any guinea grew,
 Making the common phrase seem true
 About a rich complexion‡."

Certainly, few men will question that Catholicism, more than any thing else, tends to produce an opposite character, by presenting a different object for ambition from that of being a man of unknown wealth, whose heir, likely to inherit but weak brains, will wish that his father should soon make a journey to Erebus, for the sake of that proverb which proclaims who is the happy son. Nothing, again, more effectually checks that cunning worldliness and vanity which so often degrade the old, than the

* Considerat. sur la Vieillesse.

† Lib. iii.

‡ Hood.

same influence. Antonio de Guevara only speaks the sense of all Catholic instruction where he says, "It would be a horrible scandal to see only white hairs on the heads of old knights, and to find nothing but vanity and lies upon their tongues. The old," he continues, "often complain that the young will not converse with them; but truly, if there be a fault here, it is all on their side; for if an old talker once begins, he will never finish; so that a discreet person would rather go six leagues on foot than bear him three hours*." Against worldliness in old age the voice of Catholicism is powerful. "*Vae vobis quia declinavit dies—that is,*" adds St. Anthony of Padua, "*the day of grace and the light of interior and natural condition—quia longiores factæ umbræ vespere tendente lumine ad occasum.* And truly it often happens that as our life declines to its setting, these shadows, that is, the loves of earthly things, increase. For men, feeling their strength fail, seek the more to live†." St. Bernard has terrible words for such old persons: "*Maledictum caput canum et cor vanum, caput tremulum et cor emulum, canities in vertice et perniciēs in mente; facies rugosa et lingua rugosa, cutis sicca et fides ficta; visus caligans et caritas claudicans; labium pendens et dens detrahens; virtus debilis et vita flebilis; dies uberes et fructus steriles, amici multi et actus stulti.*" Catholic poets themselves seem inspired by the theologian in expressing their horror of the vices which sometimes degrade the old, and in giving them counsel. "Man," says Don Fernando, with Calderon, "be ready always for eternity; and delay not till infirmities admonish thee, for thou art thyself thy worst infirmity."

But passing from such instructions, which have been repeatedly heard on former roads, let us only mark the facts which are here presented to us in the marvellous change and contrast produced in the character of old age, when it has been submitted to the central attraction, and when its years, though they show white, are worthy, judicious, able, and heroic. The best proof we can have, perhaps, will be to behold a living example; let us then only see approach one of these well-directed and happy old men, in whom we must revere

"The symbol of a snow-white beard,
Bedewed with meditative tears,
Dropped from the lenient cloud of years."

Let him, I say, only come up, and we may close our books.

"O infinite virtue! com'st thou smiling from
The world's great snare uncaught?"

* L'Horloge des Princes, liv. iii. 1124.

† Serm. Fev. iii. in Passione.

As Massinger says, "His face denoteth fulness of content, and glory hath a part in't." In the catacombs one finds the figure or imprint of a seal, which represents the sole of a foot or shoe, on which is written "in Deo," to signify that man is a traveller, and that the end of his pilgrimage is God. They who, in a general way, correspond with this symbol, are witnesses to prove the efficacy of Catholicism in forming old age to virtue, their path being that of the just, resembling a light which shines more and more until the perfect day. Though rocks and currents have been long past, the voyage of the soul, we are told, is often less safe in the calm of age than amidst the gales of youth and maturity; for, as Dante says,

"———— I have seen
A bark, that all her way across the sea
Ran straight and speedy, perish at the last
E'en in the haven's mouth*."

But central principles ward off such catastrophes, when to the Church, as the guardian of all that is wise and beautiful, an old man says,

"———— My wishes here
Are centred; in this palace is the weal,
That Alpha and Omega is, to all
The lessons love can read me †."

For then, as Don Antonio de Guevara recommends, when writing to an aged commander, the old man, intent upon some noble object, passes much of his time actively employed, serving God and his fellow-men, visiting poor people, hospitals, and holy places; like the Marquis de Chenoise, founder of the convent of Mercy, on the estate which bears that name in the diocese of Sens, who, in his old age, living in retirement, used every day, for some purpose of charity or public service, to repair to these ransomers of captives, and then, on his return, spend the afternoon in study at the end of the vast gardens of his castle ‡. Old men, when amerced of central principles, cease to take a great interest in any thing. That hearty energy which made youth so generous has left them. A pleasant story was current in the humbler classes lately, of a young man who received half-a-crown to raise an applausive voice in one of our theatres in favour of an actor on his first appearance, and who clapped and shouted so loud that he got turned out for his pains. Old age does not offend in this way of exceeding in what its duty or its gratitude requires; but Catholicism has the secret of reviving this kind of

* Par. 13.

† Par. 26.

‡ Hist. de l'Ord. de la Mercy, 885.

spirit in the decline of life, and of turning it to excellent account. Who has not remarked the prodigious activity of the old French curate, the old Catholic gentleman, who has some great interest of religion, or of his country, or of mankind at heart, and who, when surprise is expressed at his evincing such sustained energy, will reply perhaps with Cicero, saying, "*Nihil autem magis cavendum est senectuti, quam ne languori se desidiaeque dedat **;" or point at the brave old oak, and repeat the lines alluding to it,

"Its leaf, though late in spring it shares
The zephyr's gentle sigh,
As late and long in autumn wears
A deeper, richer dye.
Type of an honest English heart,
It opes not at a breath,
But having open'd plays its part
Until it sinks in death?"

What an indomitable spirit in braving every danger and embracing suffering is displayed by those aged confessors of the faith who rise up from time to time in the Catholic Church to astonish a persecuting government, and edify the whole of Christendom, as in the instance of Vicari, the octogenarian archbishop of Fribourg, at the present moment! England, in the time of her troubles, had many such examples. Father Forrest, the director of Queen Catherine, writing to her from Newgate, used these words, which his death did not belie: "Christ Jesu give you, daughter and lady mine, above all mortal delights, which are of brief continuance, the joy of seeing his divine presence for evermore! Pray that I may fight the battle to which I am called, and finally overcome. Would it become this white beard and these hoary locks to give way in aught that concerns the glory of God? Would it become, lady mine, an old man to be appalled with childish fear who has seen sixty-four years of life, and forty of those has worn the habit of the glorious St. Francis? Weaned from terrestrial things, what is there for me, if I have not strength to aspire to those of God? I send your majesty my rosary, for they tell me that of my life but three days remain."

Homer seems to regard as miserable the old man who likes to exert himself.

Σχέτλιος ἔσσι, γεραιέ· σὺ μὲν πόνου οὔποτε λήγεις †.

To sleep on soft beds, and to partake of the best fare, seems, according to this poet, to be the privilege of old age—*ἡ γὰρ δίκη*

* Do Off. i. 34.

† x. 164.

ἐστὶ γερόντων*. But it must be acknowledged that the ancients in general were more disposed to admire than to pity examples of activity in old age. Diogenes, being far advanced in years, was advised to relax in his labours. "What!" said he, "near the end of a race ought not one to strive the more?" They had great examples, too, of such perseverance. Strabo, after completing forty-three books of history, as a continuation of Polybius, had the courage, in the eighty-third year of his age, to commence his great geographical work. Plato died in his eighty-first year, pen in hand. Isocrates composed his Panathenæicus, a most noble book, full of an ardent spirit, in his ninety-fourth year; and Cato pleaded like a young man in the eighty-fifth year of his age. Chrysippus, in his eightieth year, left a subtle volume. Sophocles, at the age nearly of a hundred, wrote his *Œdipus Coloneus*. Simonides, when he was eighty, wrote poems. Memorable was the active, hardy old age of M. Valerius Corvus, who completed his hundredth year in full activity; and that of Metellus, whose hand never trembled at the same age; and that of Q. Fabius Maximus, and of Hiero of Sicily, and of Masinissa, king of Numidia, who went bareheaded in cold and rain, and that of Gorgias, who had nothing to abate from his exertions in the 107th year of his age. These instances are admirable; but they do not put to shame what Catholicism can produce in later ages, as the literary annals of any one order, like that of the Benedictines, will testify. Dom Luc d'Achery, having finished his thirteen volumes of the *Spicilegium*, and being at a very advanced age, for a short moment thought it time to rest from his labours, and prepare for death. But he soon grew weary of doing nothing for the public, and resolved to continue that work, for which he had already materials sufficient to form six volumes more. In spite of his years, therefore, he resumed his labours; but he was then nearer death than he thought. Dom Beaugendre, at the age of eighty, published, with learned notes, and after collating many manuscripts, the works of the venerable Hildebert, archbishop of Tours, as also those of Marbode, bishop of Rennes. But the labours of Montfaucon present perhaps the most remarkable example of mental energy in old age. In a letter to Quirini he apologizes for not having attended to some former literary commission, and says, "I confess that I forgot it, and your eminence ought not to be surprised; for in the eighty-second year of my age I am more overwhelmed with work than during any other period of my life. I am at present at the thirteenth and last volume of St. Chrysostom, which gives me great fatigue; and I am printing at the same time the *Bibliotheca Bibliothecarum Nova*, in

two volumes in folio, which will be finished before Whitsuntide. Besides, added to all this, I have been nearly two months laid up in the infirmary with a wound which I gave my leg, but I am now well *." It would be easy to add similar examples from the annals of the Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, and Jesuits; but as our last glass but one is now turned, and runs apace, we cannot delay to produce them. The Baron de PELLE is greatly struck at finding that D'Andilly translated the history of Josephus when he had attained the age of eighty-one; but how many instances of equal and greater courage could be found among the religious orders, as well as in the secular society which Catholicism inspires! "No age," says Marinæus Siculus, "is too great for learning. King Alphonso, the uncle of King Ferdinand, after spending his life in wars, at the age of sixty began to learn Latin like a boy, and succeeded in acquiring a perfect knowledge of that language †." Moreover, in every sphere examples could be multiplied of Catholic old men, like Michel Agnolo Buonaroti, full of energy and activity to the last; for faith requires men not to falter in well-doing, nor to forget such lessons as the old poet teaches in the lines—

"Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
Remigiis subigit, si brachia forte remisit
Atque illum in præceps prono rapit alveus amni†."

In the year 1566, when Vasari was at Venice, he went to visit Titian, and found him, although then very old, still with the pencils in his hand, and painting busily. Jacopo Sansovino, so renowned in sculpture, and so eminent in the grace of God, continued to labour like a young man up to the age of ninety-three years; when one day feeling himself somewhat weary, he lay down in his bed to repose himself, and without any illness, after six weeks, departed. Bronzino, in his sixty-fifth year, was no less enamoured of his art than he was as a youth, undertaking still the greatest work. The amiable and religious Vasari was himself interrupted by death in painting the great cupola of the Duomo at Florence, in the sixty-third year of his age. In the civil, and even in the military service of states there are similar examples. During the war of Alphonso V. in Africa, the duke of Braganza, who was named Regent on his absence in 1460, had begged permission to accompany him on the expedition, though he was in his ninetieth year. For him the poet seems to have composed these lines:

"Nunc erat, ut posito deberem fine laborum
Vivere, me nullo sollicitante metu;

* Corresp. tom. iii. lett. ccccviii.

† Mar. Sic. Epist.

‡ Georg. i. 230.

Quæque meæ semper placuerunt otia menti,
 Carpere, et in studiis molliter esse meis;
 Et parvam celebrare domum, veteresque Penates
 Et quæ nunc domino rura paterna carent;
 Inque sinu dominæ, carisque nepotibus, inque
 Securus patria consensuisse mea.
 Aspera militiæ juvenis certamina fugi,
 Nec nisi lusura movimus arma manu.
 Nunc senior gladioque latus, scutoque sinistram,
 Canitiem galeæ subjicioque meam."

What instances might we not produce, also, of activity in charitable and laborious deeds, protracted to the oldest age, within the Catholic Church! whereas, if all principles and motives that have their centre there be renounced, we shall not have long to wait in order to witness how obdurately the old man finishes, while forgetful of all that should embalm his memory. As the poet says, "Degenerat; palmæ veterumque oblitus honorum."

Again, we should observe the enlarged conceptions, the benevolence, and kindness, which central principles substitute for that narrow-minded, sour-crabbéd morosity which is so apt to creep into the breasts of the old. "His gregarious nature," says an eminent author, "is one cause of man's superiority over all other animals. A lion lies under a hole in a rock; and if any other lion happen to pass by, they fight. Now, whoever gets a habit of lying under a hole in a rock, and fighting with every gentleman who passes near him, cannot possibly make any progress. Every man's understanding and acquirements, how great and extensive soever they may appear, are made up from the contributions of others." Naturally there seems a tendency in old age to make men choose a ferine solitude, from which they may issue forth at times to attack all who pass, or at least growl at them from a distance.

ὥς δύσκολον τὸ γῆρας ἀνθρώποις ἔφη
 ἐν τ' ὄμμασι σκυθρωπὸν*.

But the central influence induces other habits in accordance with the interests of the intelligence and of the heart. The exclamation of the poet would not be warranted by the character of the old persons that meet us now, with whose counsels it stands not to fly upon invectives. How sweet and affable rather, we may exclaim, does this old age exhibit itself to all observers, as if it bore a childish overflowing love to all who come across it!

But as we may have occasion to return to this subject, let us proceed at once to observe, in the second place, how central

* Bacch. 1251.

principles tend to remove the moral, and even to alleviate the physical miseries incident to old age. Recurring, as usual, to the forest for its symbolism, we may observe that at this passage of our journey it wears an aspect which seems to correspond with the advance of a late season in the life of man ; for some trees here are nearly stripped of their leaves, and the foliage is every where changing its colour. The autumnal tints are stealing over the woods ; and the paths, strewed with sear and yellow leaves, exhibit the bright but mournful beauty of October. So it is with those from whom this road derives its title. The sand of many hours has fallen from time's grey glass since we met our Rambler on the roads of childhood and of youth, when his hairs grew up beautiful as the ebony, and curled themselves into a thousand pretty caves, for love itself to sit that best delights in darkness. In those days the quaint compliment of the good mother in the Knight of the Burning Pestle might have been addressed to him : " The twelve companies of London cannot match him timber for timber." But all this flower has dropped off. The influence of time, calamity, or sickness, has long ruined that bright fabric nature took such pride to build ; and truly it is not wonderful that soft, frail flesh should change, since time wears out the hardest things.

" In time all haggard hawks will stoop to lure ;
In time small wedges cleave the hardest oak ;
In time the flint is pierc'd with softest shower."

Recur again for an image to those old wells in the forest of Marly, which once formed a watering-place for the king's horses, and which are now all that remains there of royalty. How worn away and stained is this monument ! We have already remarked that a poet finds a resemblance in it to an old man, and Shakspeare uses the same image, when he compares him to " a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns." Charles of Orleans relates a dream which he had on one occasion, anticipating this change in regard to himself. It was Time which under the form of an old man appeared to him, and said, " It was I who delivered you first to childhood, and then to youth, and now I come to place you under reason."

" Avez-vous, ce n'est pas chose faine,
Car vieillesse, la mère de courroux,
Qui tout abat et amaine audessous
Vous donnera dedans brief une atainte."

" Then," he says of himself, " I woke starting, trembling as the leaf upon the tree, and I said,

" ———— Helas ! onques mais ne songeay
Chose dont tant mon poure cuer se dueille :

Car s'il est vray que nature me veuille
 Abandoner, je ne seay que feray :
 O vieillesse tenir pié ne pourray,
 Mais convendra que tout ennuy m'acueille.' "

Ulysses weeps when he sees Laertes so changed by years*. "I had not seen Cephalus for a long time," says Socrates, speaking of the company he found with Polemarque, "and he seemed to me as grown very old †." When the brothers of St. Placidus came to Sicily in order to visit him, Gordianus says that "at first they did not recognize him, because having been offered so young to St. Benedict, since which time they had never seen him, the change from boyhood, and that effected by all that he had since undergone, rendered it difficult for them to believe that it could be the same person." St. Gregory, in his last years, wrote to the Monk Secundinus, saying, "You must know, dearest son, that I am pressed with such pains of the gout, and with so many tumults of cares, that, although I never remember that I was any thing, I can yet clearly perceive that I am not what I was ‡." A little later, writing to Maximian, a bishop of Arabia, the same great pope had to tell harder truths respecting himself. "I have not," he says, "been able now for a long time to rise from my bed. In brief, the infection of the noxious humour has so pervaded me, that to live is for me a punishment, and I anxiously expect death, which I believe is the only remedy for my sufferings §." To Rusticianus also he makes the same complaints—which furnish, by the way, an instance to prove that the supreme pontiff, as well as the common Christian, may adopt without offence the style and language of the classics—for the words of St. Gregory seem but an echo of the lines,

"Non sum qui fueram : quid inanem proteris umbram ?
 Hector erat tunc cum bello certabat ; at idem
 Vincetus ad Hæmonios non erat Hector equos.
 Me quoque, quem noras olim, non esse memento."

We often speak of things deeply affecting ourselves in a very light, careless way, without appearing to feel what they signify. There is an instance of this in the Homeric farewell,

Χαῖρέ μοι,—διαμπερές, εἰσόκε γῆρας
 ἔλθῃ καὶ θάνατος τὰ τ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώποισι πέλονται ||.

For though there is nothing easier than to say good-bye, when upon the threshold of a long absence, it is a fearful thing to

* xxiv. 232.

† Lib. vii. Indict. 2, Ep.

|| xliii. 60.

‡ De Repub. i.

§ Lib. ix. ep. 27.

think of the moment when we shall meet again and compare notes, and of all the changes that will have taken place in the interim. Such farewells savour more of eternity than of life. "I had seen Madame de Staël a child," says Simond, "and I saw her again on her deathbed." The meeting in that instance was too late; but come as it may, it will certainly bring with it recollections that only very flinty bosoms can endure unmoved. The poet represents the scene that may ensue:

"Lead us from hence; where we may leisurely
Each one demand and answer to his part
Perform'd in the wide gap of time, since first
We were dissever'd."

But the answer with some who stand as we do in the forest might be a silent pointing to the last vestiges that the eye can discover of some aged, ruined tree. Follow all the periods in the life of an oak, from the moment when it rises out of the ground with two little green leaves, till the day when all that is left of it is a long black trace, which is the dust of its heart; not much more, perhaps, will be found remaining of the man breathing out his frame like dust, falling all to pieces as if about to be made his own grave, and nothing of him left but memories which seem to burn his heart to ashes.

"O ruin'd piece of nature! this giant world
Shall so wear out to nought."

Homer seems to think that the sufferings of the old are most worthy of compassion:

τοῦτο δὲ οἰκτιστον πέλειται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν *.

At all events there is no denying that their state partakes, in no scanty measure, of the misery incident to human life in all its stages; and well may the poet, describing what Ulysses saw in the shades, say, in alluding to some of them,

πολύτλητοί τε γέροντες †.

Youth has its sorrows: who has not felt how intense they can be? Manhood, when well inspired, can hardly be distinguished from it, either in its gleams or shadows.

"——— Sed jam felicior ætas
Terga dedit, tremuloque gradu venit ægra senectus ‡."

It would be long to observe the melancholy pictures of old age which the ancient poets and philosophers produce. The lines of Euripides in the *Hecuba*, of Juvenal, and others, will recur to the memory of many; and the modern complaints resemble

* *xxii.* 76.

† *xi.* 33.

‡ *Met.* *xiv.*

them. The Florentine painter, Jacopo da Pontormo, being employed to invent decorations for a triumph significant of human life in its different states, inscribed the word *Erimus* on the chariot which was to convey youth ; *Sumus* on that reserved for manhood ; and *Fuimus* on the last, in which the aged were to be seated. Pope Innocent III., no fantastic artist or romantic writer, is not disposed to take a different view of the last period of life on earth. " Few men," saith he, " attain their fortieth year, a very few their sixtieth ; and what infirmities of body and mind are the heritage of old age ! How painful is life then ! Have men desired wisdom and science ? then what watchings, troubles, and labours have been their lot ! and how little, after all, is the knowledge that they have gained ! Are they married ? then what necessities encompass them ! Life is a military service ; it is surrounded on all sides by enemies and dangers. Death incessantly threatens us ; we tremble for friends and relations. Before we expect it, the misfortune arrives, the infirmity seizes us, and the generations of the world since it began have not sufficed to discover all the kinds of suffering to which the fragility of man is liable." The poet, therefore, must be excused when he says,

" And next in order sad old age we found ;
 His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind,
 With drooping cheer, still poring on the ground,
 As on the place where nature him assigned
 To rest, when that the sisters had untwined
 His vital thread, and ended with their knife
 The fleeting course of fast-declining life.
 There heard we him, with broke and hollow plaint,
 Rue with himself his end approaching fast,
 And all for nought his wretched mind torment
 With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past,
 And fresh delights of lusty youth forewaste ;
 Recounting which how would he sob and shriek,
 And to be young again of Jove beseech * ! "

This morbid regret for departed youth constituted, in fact, one of the natural miseries of old age. Sad lamentations are breathed under these boughs at this pass of the road. Oh, call back yesterday ! bid time return, and thou shalt be adored.

" Ah me, my friend ! it will not, will not last,
 This fairy scene, that cheats our youthful eyes !
 The charm dissolves, th' aerial music's past ;
 The banquet ceases, and the vision flies."

It would be long to listen to the ancient complaints like those of the Chorus,

νῦν δ' ἀπολείπομαι
τᾷς εὐδαίμονος ἡβας*.

"Youth," they sing, "charms me—*ἀ νεότης μοι φίλον*; but old age, burden heavier than the rocks of *Ætna*, weighs down our heads, and spreads over our eyes a darksome veil." Maffei expresses this regret in words nearly similar to the last, saying, "What wouldest thou give me? I desire nothing; and what would be dear to me no one can bestow. I should wish that the heavy burden of years might be removed from me. It weighs on my head; it sinks me to the earth, as if it were a mountain. I would give all the gold, and all the kingdoms of the world, to have restored to me the days of my youth." The poet of the Lakes gives utterance to the same feelings:

"Soft gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart, return!"

But all this belongs, you maintain, to the pagan or romantic schools. To say so argues only the affectation of obdurate theorists—of unnatural insensibility. We have the same sentiments expressed by holy Job: "*Quis mihi tribuat, ut sim juxta menses pristinos, secundum dies quibus Deus custodiebat me? quando splendebat lucerna ejus super caput meum et ad lumen ejus ambulabam in tenebris? sicut fui in diebus adolescentiæ meæ, quando secreto Deus erat in tabernaculo meo? quando erat Omnipotens mecum, et in circuitu meo pueri mei?*" Such then, when left without the impressions we are about to trace, is man lamenting that he has reached this westward corner of the wood, this last but one of the roads through life's forest—

ὁν πότμον γούων' χαλεπὸν δ' ἐπὶ γῆρας ἰκάνει †.

Some, as practical men, only say like Cato the Censor in his old age, that "it is painful to have to render an account of one's life to men of a different age from that in which one has lived." Others, as imaginative, are oppressed with the thought that the light of youth should be withdrawn for ever. Others, in fine, less poetical and sensitive, only lament the loss of strength which has ensued. Timanthes had given up his profession of an athlete, but in order to preserve his muscular force he used to draw the bow daily. Having to travel once, he was obliged to interrupt his custom, and when he wished to resume it he found that he had not sufficient strength left to do so. Finding that he was no longer like himself, he was so afflicted that he kindled his

* *Herc. Furens*, 440.

† xi. 195.

own pile and threw himself upon it*. Look around, and you will see in the forest an image of this affliction; for when the common birch-tree arrives in age at a considerable size, the branches hang down and weep.

Now for all these afflictions and miseries it is certain that your old Catholicism offers a remedy; if not a complete and absolute specific, at least a most useful palliative and an immense alleviation. In the first place, it is calculated to diminish, to soothe, and to shorten even the physical evils of old age, since the discipline of life which follows from it constitutes the most likely means of keeping off infirmities. Central principles for many men have proved their life's restorer; and, next to Heaven, their thanks are due to the Mother Church who has precepts by which they may preserve life to a length, and end it happy. Though they climb hills of years, not one wrinkle sits upon their brow, nor any sickness shakes them. Some who are without its influence can say of themselves, in the words of Pliny, "We believe all quacks who promise health. We know them to be quacks, non tamen illud intuemur, adeo blanda est sperandi pro se cuique dulcedo †." Those who have adopted central views and manners are not such customers to the college, whether, like "the French physicians, they who come from it be learned and careful," as the old English poet says, or "like your English velvet-cap, malignant and envious ‡." As Sidonius Apollinaris says, "Although sick, they would prefer hearing Socrates dispute on morals to listen to Hippocrates treating on bodies §." They are like the common people in this respect, who have no fancied maladies. "When I was poor," says Geta in the Prophetess, "I could endure like others; but since I grew rich, let but my finger ache, unless I have a doctor, mine own doctor, that may assure me, I am gone." The common people, in most cases, have nature for their doctor.

"If sick with the excess of heat or cold,
Caused by virtuous labour, not loose surfeits,
They, when spare diet, or kind nature fail
To perfect their recovery, soon arrive at
Their rest in death; while, on the contrary,
Other rich men are exposed as preys
To the rapine of physicians, who still
In lingering out what is remediless,
Aim at their profit."

It is clear that the ancient hermits, who lived to such an age, had no physicians in their inaccessible solitudes, and that they

* Pausanias, lib. vi.

† The Return from Parnassus.

‡ Nat. Hist. lib. xxix. 8.

§ Lib. ix. epist. 14.

died without other assistance but that of saints and angels. The Church expressly records of St. Agatha that she received no assistance from physicians *. “Master John de Nivelles, dean of Lieges, was always,” says an old writer, “labouring in his holy vocation. During a long and violent indisposition, a great physician came from France at his own expense to cure him; and when the holy man had asked how long a time he must persevere in using the remedy, and heard that after four months his cure would be complete, striking his hands he exclaimed, ‘Alas! miserable me, if for this perishable flesh I should cease for only three weeks! Dear master, return to your country when you please; Christ will repay you for your good intention and your labour †.’” Charlemagne, whenever indisposed, applied the remedy of abstinence and diet, and found it successful. In his last sickness, having recourse to it, and perceiving it fail, he intimated his conviction that his hour was come for departing to the other world. St. Ambrose, on the supposition that the precepts of medicine are contrary to the celestial science—to fasts, vigils, and meditation—says, rather rhetorically, “Itaque qui se medicis dederit, seipsum sibi abnegat ‡;” and the blessed Guignes, the Carthusian, says of the religious, “Ut sanos a sanis, ita ægrotos ab ægrotis sæcularibus debere cogitent discrepare §.” But Catholicism, we are assured, sanctions no exaggeration in this respect; and, after all, “when sick,” said St. Syneliticus, “do not ascribe your malady to having fasted, for those who do not fast are quite as often sick as those who do fast ||.” Far, indeed, does it seem from the spirit of Catholicity to throw discredit on a most noble profession, which in every age has boasted of such men as Dupuytren and Recamier, who have found upon a road that might have been followed during our past wanderings an attraction constituted by their scientific discoveries and by their observation of other men, which either recalled their steps to faith, if they had ever doubted, like the first of these eminent physicians, or kept them through life like the latter, persevering in attachment to those principles which enabled them to die eternally united to truth, to justice, and to peace. Marina de Escobar permitted herself to be treated by physicians, though they gave evidence on oath that they considered her pains and diseases to be supernatural and without physical cause, while in her sickness God often visited her with obscurities and derelictions, especially towards the close of her life ¶. But the truth is, that men of the central discipline are not so often sick as

* Thomassin, *Traité des Jeunes*, c. 14.

† Mag. Spec.

‡ Sermon. xxii. in Ps. 118.

§ Stat. c. 38.

|| Ant. d'Averoult, *Catéchisme historial*, vii. 20.

¶ Vit. Virg. Mar. p. ii. lib. iii. c. 2.

myself. 'How old may you be, cavalier?' I answered that I was near thirty. 'Then,' said she, 'you were right in supposing that I am older than yourself. I am older than your mother or your mother's mother: it is more than a hundred years since I was a girl and sported with the daughters of the town on the hill side.' She then added that she was upwards of a hundred and ten years of age." But what is very remarkable, in order to find examples of old age in greatest abundance, we must repair to the places where the Catholic life is found in its severest form, namely, to the desert and the monastery. St. Paul, the first hermit, lived to a hundred and sixteen years, of which a hundred were spent in the desert; St. Anthony lived to be a hundred and five, and ninety of these were passed in the desert; St. Paphnutius attained to the age of ninety; St. Hilarion, though weak and delicate, to that of eighty-four, and he spent seventy years in the desert; James, a Persian hermit, lived to be a hundred and four; St. Macarius, to be ninety, and sixty of these years were in the desert; Arsenius lived to a hundred and twenty, and he spent fifty-five in the desert. So also among monks: St. Benedict lived to be sixty-three; St. Maur, to be seventy; St. Romuald, to be a hundred and twenty; St. Robert, to be ninety-three; St. Peter Celestin, to be eighty-one; St. John Gualbert, to be seventy-eight; St. Gall, to be ninety-five; St. Æmilian, to a hundred and eight; St. Silvester, to be ninety*. Common life, however, in the world, under the central influence, presents extreme old age as a common phenomenon. The grandfather of Mabillon lived to the age of a hundred and sixteen, and his father to that of a hundred and eight. "I have seen the latter," says Ruinart, "still vigorous, and with all his faculties sound and entire, at the age of a hundred and five." Catholicism witnesses a fulfilment of the prophecy where it is written, "Thus saith the Lord: There shall be old men and old women dwelling in Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." "Lately," says Drexelius, "the pro-bishop of Bamberg, in Thuringia, had administered the last sacraments to about six thousand persons. Among these more than two hundred had attained to upwards of a hundred years. One was a hundred and fifty years old; his sons were more than a hundred; his grandsons more than seventy. All had lived Catholically, frugally. How many," he adds, "are there now in the Alps who are more than eighty or ninety, without having ever tasted meat or wine! I lately saw one who was more than a hundred and twenty, who had never used other medicine but temperance. Louis Cor-

* Hæftenus, *Econom. Monast. lib. viii. c. 6.*

naro, the Venetian, by following the same discipline, could, in his eighty-third year, mount the steepest hills like a youth*." "As for you," says Mabillon to Magliabechi, when both were at a very advanced age, "take a little more care of your health, which is so dear to me, and reflect that neither of us are any longer young men of twenty, to neglect yourself as you have hitherto done †." There is constant occasion for such advice where life is directed by views and practices that may be called central, from their connexion with Catholicity and nature. If some who follow the discipline of which we are speaking should be infirm, it is, probably, that other causes besides years have been in action to produce such results. As a monk of Monte Cassino sings,

"Non ætate quidem senui, sed cladibus, heu, tot
Nostra quibus perpes subdita vita fuit ‡."

Nor is it perhaps unworthy of notice that this manner of life tends even to preserve a graceful and noble exterior in the old. Nature, when its design is not battled by some intervening accident, is, after all, beautiful even in its decline, as may be witnessed in shrubs when covered late in the year with the traveller's joy.

"Quique per autumnum percussis frigore primo
Est color in foliis, quæ nova hesit hiems §."

In old age the elm, in some instances, as we have already remarked, and the ash almost always, lose that grandeur and beauty which the oak preserves; but how majestic is the latter tree!

"Still clad with reliques of its trophies old,
Lifting to heaven its aged, hoary head,
Whose foot on earth hath got but feeble hold."

Some individuals of every species retain beauty to extreme old age. The cedar-tree of California, that is two thousand years old, has none of that deformity which commonly characterizes trees of a great age, but from one end to the other it is a model of symmetry. The Scotch fir, that is hideous in its youth, becomes at a very advanced age precious to every artistic eye. In the north the bark of trees is covered with lichens and mosses; in the tropical forests flowers of every colour twine round each trunk; but there is a pure white lichen, beautiful in the contrast which it presents to the coloured lichens, intermingled with it, and yet denoting that the vigour of the tree is about to fail. In

* Rosæ Select. Virt. p. i. c. xi.

† Corresp. ii. lett. cclxxxv.

‡ Hist. Cassinens. xi. 675.

§ Trist. iii. 8.

like manner there is a peculiar beauty that belongs to the aged of human kind, enduring until they wholly perish, and all their painted frailties turn to ashes. True, there is a charm that blows the first fire in us which lasts not. Time, as he passes by, puts out that sparkle. The smooth forehead, peachy cheeks, and milky neck, which once required the pencil of a Raphael to portray them, will in the decline of life demand that of a Titian or a Velasquez; but how noble and loveable may the whole, however changed, still be! It may even present an analogy with the acajou, of which the wood only grows more precious by growing old. That intelligent and amiable expression which the exercise of benevolent feelings imparts to the eyes and mouth may still be seen. It is

“ —— Spectabilis heros

Et veteris retinens etiamnum pignora formæ.”

It is not of necessity, then, that men grow ugly with advancing years. “The effect of the passions,” says Southey, “upon the face is more rapid and more certain than that of time.” Come, let a court be opened here, and let women pronounce sentence. Mark these countenances, then, as painted by Ben Jonson and others. Is it age that makes your merchant or city face—that dull, plodding face, still looking in a direct line forward—of which he says so wittily, “There is no great matter in this face?” Is it age that makes your lawyer’s face, a contracted, subtle, and intricate face, full of quirks and turnings, a labyrinthean face, now angularly, now circularly, every way aspected? Is it age that forms your statistic’s face, a serious, solemn, and supercilious face, full of formal and square gravity; the eye, for the most part, deeply and artificially shadowed? Is it age that makes your face of faces, your courtier theoric, a fastidious and oblique face, that looks as it went with a vice and were screwed up? Or is it age that forms the menacing, astounding face of the justice that speaks chains and shackles, “who would commit a man for taking the wall of his horse?” Look, too, at that betting, bargaining, and saving face, that rich face, fit to be pawned to the usurer; or at that hunting face to court the wind with; or at that proud face, with such a load of lord upon it; or at that sanctimonious, serious, scornful owl face, with equipage canonical, as though he had broken the heart of Bellarmine; or at that sour, prognosticating face, that passes by all flesh so negligently. What part, it may be asked, ye fair judges, had age in the formation of any of these countenances? Not the least, they will tell you; whereas, on the other hand, these very faces turn the tables against manhood and womanhood, and even youth, since it is clear from this evidence that these can wear state or business, or Pharisaic or unmeaning faces, in which the best judges, male or

female, see no attraction that they should desire much to look on them—faces in which there is not a line or expression but what denotes that each possessor should never hope to come in the same room where lovers are, and escape unbrained with one of their slippers. Every one, in fact, must have observed that there is a beauty, which, as the duchess of Newcastle said of her mother's, is "beyond the reach of time;" beauty depending upon the mind, upon the temper, which keeps even the person long attractive.

"Nor spring nor summer's beauty hath such grace
As I have seen in one autumnal face *."

Obviously, then, a discipline like the Catholic, which preserves a just, free, calm, hopeful, and, above all, charitable mind to the highest bent of kindness and of love, must conduce to preserve external beauty.

But, in the second place, Catholicism tends to ward off the moral miseries of the old, and, in fact, the preceding results have in great part been the consequence of this latter deliverance. To begin with those mental miseries formed by regrets for the passing away of youth, and of what was loved in youth, we may observe that nothing is so calculated to alleviate or dissipate them as that manly, hopeful spirit emanating from central principles, which involve essentially that maxim, so much extolled at present, of going ahead—of looking always to the future, and of pressing forward with restless energy to some great and hitherto unattained felicity. Where central principles have influence, there is none of this morbid looking back upon the past. The future seems all in all. Full of hope and confidence, men are then ready for every thing in advance of them, though it were for what without faith to guide them would be a leap in the dark. Catholicism says ever to the old,

"—— Bate not a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward."

In this respect the effect is the same both in regard to private and public consideration, whether we look to personal or general interests. The Count de Maistre, imagining that he foresaw the dissolution of society, writing, a few days before his death, to the Count Marcellus, used these words: "I feel that I am sinking day by day. *Hic jacet!* Such will soon be all that will remain to me of the goods of this world. I finish with Europe. This is departing in good company. *C'est s'en aller en bonne compagnie.*" These, if one might venture to criticize any words of such a writer, seem perhaps to be the expressions of the man of

letters, of the statesman and politician, rather than of the Christian uttering the Catholic inspirations, which breathe confidence equally in the future, the present, and the past, as in the noble answer of Ordellia, who, when asked was there ever yet, or may there be, found any to practise wholly disinterested virtue, replies, "Many dead, sir; living, I think, as many." Chateaubriand at least appears to express the latter in a manner admitting of no misconstruction, and in a passage, too, of singular beauty. "While tracing," he says, "these last words, this 16th of November, 1841, my window, which opens to the west on the gardens of the Missions étrangères, is open. It is six o'clock in the morning. I perceive the pale, broad moon; it is sinking on the spire of the Invalides, scarcely illumined by the first golden ray of the Aurora. One might say that it was the ancient world finishing, and the new commencing. I see the dawn of a morning of which I shall not see the sunrise. All that remains for me is to sit down by the side of my grave, and then, with the crucifix in my hand, I shall descend with courage into eternity." Such are the last words of his *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*. Truly, a noble conclusion. Thus does Catholicism inspire the old with cheerful confidence, let the times on which they are fallen or the prospects of futurity be what they may. It teaches confidence in virtue under all changes, and at the same time the folly of anachronism in the conduct of states as of individuals, and thereby induces both to accept with proper limitations the motto of Frederic of Arragon, king of Naples, which was, "Recedant vetera." If Catholicism resists a dogged but movable and bewildering spirit of innovation, it does not seem, on the other hand, to side with an equally dogged but impenetrable and immovable conservatism. It does not seek to turn men into owls. An antiquary will sacrifice the gravest interests if he can but revive any old, dark thing that, like an image in a German clock, doth move, not walk, loving it because it looks like some old, ruined piece that was fabricated five ages ago. He will be as singular, too, in his revival of obsolete words to suit some whim or other as ever was the hero of Cervantes, or Ralph in the Knight of the Burning Pestle, who would call all forests and heaths deserts, and all horses palfries, substituting yeveled for named, and eke for also. But men of central principles, being necessarily opposed to foolery of every description, will exclaim, "Would you begin a work never yet attempted, to pull Time backward? Let us be thankful for that which is, and leave disputes that are beside our question. Let us go off and bear us like the time." "If those laws you speak of," says an author, who is often inspired by Catholicism, "had been delivered to us ab initio, and in their present state, there had been some reason of obeying their powers; but it is certain that in many things con-

cerning which some particular age is invoked as the ultimate judge there has been a succession of changes." In building, in decoration, in vestments, in discipline, every generation in the dignity of its spirit and judgment supplied some things, and altered others with all liberty, according to the elegance and disposition of its times. Catholicism wills not, then, but we should enjoy the same licence or free power to illustrate and heighten our invention as they did, and not be tied to those strict and regular forms which the niceness of a few, who are nothing but form, would thrust upon us. Why should we be obliged to imitate the twelfth, or the thirteenth, or the sixteenth century, rather than those times which preceded or followed them? And then to mark the stress that is laid upon some servile copying! Are not obstructions actually cast in men's way by such gratuitous demands? How durst thou treat of what concerns thy contemporaries more than life, in such an antic fashion? "I should rather hear Christ than Divine Mnemosyne," said Mabillon, alluding to the hymn of Ménage, composed in his seventy-second year. It skills not if we forget even the quantity we have forgotten, provided we attend to the voice which is for all times. Writing to the Commander Don Loys Bravo, Antonio de Guevara says, "It is better to grow weary over good books than to be occupied in thinking of past times." In every point of view old age needs to be submitted to this important lesson, for the results, when it is neglected, show but very poorly. It is said that the doctrine of the circulation of the blood, when first propounded by Harvey, was not received by any anatomist or medical man who had passed his fortieth year. Merely natural old men lament a change, though it be from ignorance to knowledge. But if such regrets are discountenanced by Catholicism, when their object is of this general nature, still more so, we may be assured, are they counteracted or removed by it when they would arise from personal views of the progress of time, and from a retrospect of one's own past youth. It is not that we are to suppose that central principles interdict the memory of past enjoyments, since in fact, so far otherwise, they teach men to take the consideration of them into their general views of human life, and to render their own hearts more apt to forgive and to love others by the knowledge of what they have themselves done or suffered. No truly, the old man may sing, in the beautiful lines by a modern poet,

"But retrospection even yet
Will lead me through past-trodden ways,
And I remember—how forget?—
The magic of my early days;
All nature so divinely wrought
The unravelled mystery of things,

Exalted every boyish thought,
 And lent my spirit wings.
 And I remember how I grew
 Up to the sunny noon of youth,
 From youth to manhood, till I knew
 That love was close akin to truth ;
 My trials bravely overcome,—
 My triumphs, not of purpose vain,—
 All these, with vague but pleasant hum,
 Still murmur through my brain *.”

But Catholicism seems to ward off the sorrow which sometimes accompanies such recollections, and we have already remarked the curious fact, which should be again glanced at here, that even the cause of these bitter regrets is materially affected by its influence. “I am convinced,” says an ingenious observer, “that it is for a long time in every man’s power to determine whether he will be old or not. We may wear the inward bloom of youth with true dignity and grace, and be ready to learn and eager to give pleasure to others, to the latest moment of our existence†.” “I might have been sickly, like any body else,” used a celebrated authoress to say, “had I not resolved the contrary.” The will, no doubt, is potent in regard even to the warding off both physical weaknesses and the moral infirmities of age. What makes men old early is what every stranger can notice at the first glance as conspicuous in the face of a foolish mayor or justice on climbing into an omnibus, namely, the wilful indulgence in selfishness, bad temper, irritability, and eccentricity, rendering them whimsied, crotcheted, conundrumed. Catholicism checks these evils, and consequently keeps men in a certain sense young, imparting what Cicero thought so admirable, something of youth to old age. With that sweet mistress for companion, age may still issue forth each morning with a smiling face, and disdain to know a weakness. From it the old may draw still new vital heat, and find what fools have studied for—the elixir. “Faith,” says St. Chrysostom, “never grows old.” One might add, that it suffers no one to grow old in a certain sense, or to doat upon any former time, as if there were no youth yet reserved for himself. He who is influenced by it, says with the poet, apostrophizing the world,

“Je puis maintenant dire aux rapides années ;
 —Passez ! passez toujours ! je n’ai plus à vieillir !
 Allez-vous-en avec vos fleurs toutes fanées ;
 J’ai dans l’âme une fleur que nul ne peut cueillir !”

And then turning to Time himself he can conclude—

* J. C. Prince.

† Sid. Smith, Mor. Phil.

"Votre aile en le heurtant ne fera rien répandre
 Du vase où je m'abreuve et que j'ai bien rempli.
 Mon âme a plus de feu que vous n'avez de cendre !
 Mon cœur a plus d'amour que vous n'avez d'oubli."

Lopez de Vega expresses the central principle on this point with great force—"I count," says Arlaja, in one of his plays, "the graces and advantages of youth of themselves for nothing. The soul is every thing to me. The soul is to me youth and nobility, beauty and grace." Yes, the man of this discipline is the happy mortal, whose young thoughts are not affected by a crown of white hairs. In mind and heart, in poetry and tenderness, he is a boy, having retained the erectness and openness of his first unbiassed thoughts. "God be praised!" he says, with a celebrated German, "whatever from my youth upward appeared to me of worth is beginning once more to be dear to me." In fact, in the absence of artificial causes, nature is from time to time renewed; for, thus assisted, as Sainte Beuve observes, "man has within him many seasons of youth. A person thinks at times that the beautiful years of his life are gone for ever with their gifts; he lies down, as it were, in his grave, and weeps for himself. Presently a rarious interval succeeds; he rises again; the heart buds afresh, and feels surprise at seeing these flowers and this verdure covering the sepulchre of yesterday's sorrows. Each spring then, in fact, is a youth which nature offers us, by which it tries our capacity for enjoyment, and it is not wise to resist it overmuch." But in proportion as one departs, under any form, whether by exaggeration or opposition, from the central truth in the conduct of life, or in the sphere of the intelligence, one does resist this gracious provision of nature, one leaves at a distance the source of youth, and participates in the nature of changeable things which are daily growing old irremediably and withering away. Hence the premature decrepitude of mind and body observable in such of the young as most adopt a system of centrifugal manners.

φύονται δὲ καὶ νέοις
 ἐν ἀνδράσι πολιοί
 θαμὰ, καὶ παρὰ τὸν ἀλικίας
 ἐοικότα χρόνον*.

"The vicious," it is observed, "die early. They grow pale, and spectre-thin, and die, falling like shadows, or tumbling like wrecks and ruins, into the grave,—often while quite young, almost always before forty. They live not half their days. The world at once ratifies the truth, and assigns the reason by describing the dissolute as 'fast men;' that is, they live fast; they

spend their twelve hours in six, getting through the whole before the meridian, and dropping out of sight and into darkness, while others are in the glow and glory of life. Their sun goes down while it is yet day, and they might have helped it. They grow old and die long before they need*." In this sense, too, we hear often cited the sacred text, which says that "youths shall faint and labour, and young men shall by infirmity, but that they who hope in God shall renew their strength; that they shall take wings as eagles, shall run and not be weary, shall walk and not faint." Hugo of St. Victor finds a similitude to such facts in what is fabulously related of the eagle; for he observes, "It is said that when old its beak becomes more curved, so that at length it cannot take its food, and so languishes; till coming to a rock it corrects by pressure against it the excess of curvature, whereby it is enabled to eat again, and recover its youth. The rock," he adds, "is Christ; the eagle is the just man, who straightens his bill against it, while he renders himself conformable by virtue †." And in truth, if Danaus, when the Argiens agreed unanimously to honour the suppliants, found that his old soul grew young again, saying,

ἀλλ' ὥς ἂν ἡβήσαιμι γηραιῷ φρενὶ ‡,

it is not strange that man, on hearing that supremely good news which is implied by coming to the symbolic rock, and to the fountain from which he draws his hope of immortality, should feel the joy of his youth restored to him. It is he who can say, when things appear at the worst,

"Vivo equidem, vitanque extrema per omnia duco §."

"In the woods," says a living writer, "a man casts off his years as the snake his slough, and, at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth." In this respect, then, the forest truly represents the scene through which wander those who by the present road approach the centre. That white blooming hawthorn of Glastonbury which flowers at Christmas, and those oaks which have been observed to bud in the drear winter, are in another sense symbolical of their state.

"Their heart—it is a paradise,
Which everlasting spring has made its own,
And, while drear winter fills the naked skies,
Sweet streams of sunny thought and flowers fresh blown
Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one."

Although the man who belongs to this happy number may have travelled much, seen many parts of Europe, and encountered

* Binney. † De Bestiis, i. 56. ‡ Æsch. Supp. 603. § iii. 315.

numerous varieties of disposition among men, he will by means of this influence have preserved what constitutes the charm of youth, freshness and simplicity of character; for his experience of the world will not have rendered him worldly-minded; and though he may have beheld some of the dark shades of life in the course of his travels and adventures, he will have neither looked with a jaundiced eye upon the nature of man, nor lost his generous and sublime confidence in his fellow-creatures. Ingenuous and right-minded himself, he will not be willing to suspect the motives of others; he will like to think well of all. And then it should surprise no one if he appear possessed of many of the attributes of boyhood; for looking at the objects which still occupy his thoughts, a withered hermit, five score winters worn, might shake off fifty. The truth is, that with him even the past is perpetual youth to his heart. Sorrow shows some older than they are by many years; but the man we are observing can, like a lad, turn to sprightly mirth all things that he meets on the way, and repine at nothing. He can put down youth at her own virtues, and beat folly on her own ground. The poet's grey-haired man of glee is represented thus conversing like a boy with a boy:

“We talked with open heart and tongue,
Affectionate and true;
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.”

“The schools of the society,” says Antonio d’Escobar, “change old men into boys. I speak from experience. I have often seen in our halls men of advanced years so composed after having gone through the tumult of wars, the solicitude of a family, and the liberty of an undisciplined life, that they rather seemed to me to be boys under a senile garment. Such were the fruits of their conversion. ‘If a man,’ says Origen, ‘will only acquire the habits by reason which boys have by nature of their years, expelling those things which move the foolish, and becoming young again as our Lord requires, such a man should be received in the name of Jesus.’ Such are the men who have been bred in our schools. They learn to retain puerile manners through life*.” “I lately saw Germanicus,” says Sidonius Apollinaris, “who, though he has on his shoulders the weight of twelve lustres, yet in his habits and dress not only seems to grow young again, but, as it were, to become a boy; and, in fact, the only thing belonging to age which belongs to him is reverence†.” Central principles produce old men and old women

* Ant. d’Escobar, In Evang. Comment. tom. i. p. 163.

† iv. Epist. 13.

that look as bright and brisk as their grandchildren. "They are not querulous, selfish, misanthropic. They do not confound and frighten the young by constantly telling them of 'the howling wilderness' into which they have been born, and of the wretched thing they will find life to be. They have not found it any thing of the sort *." They would keep England merry as it was of old, and themselves merry too as when they were young; so their language is like that of Merrythought in our ancient play: "All I have to do in this world is to be merry; which I shall, if the ground be not taken from me; and if it be,

'When earth and seas from me are reft,
The skies alone for me are left.'"

We hear them sing of themselves, saying,

"I am not old—I cannot be old,
Though three score years and ten
Have wasted away, like a tale that is told,
The lives of other men.

"I am not old—though friends and foes
Alike have gone to their graves,
And left me alone to my joys or my woes,
As a rock in the midst of the waves.

"'Tis not long since—it cannot be long,
My years so soon were spent,
Since I was a boy, both straight and strong,
But now I am feeble and bent.

"A dream, a dream—it is all a dream!
A strange sad dream, good sooth;
For old as I am, and old as I seem,
My heart is full of youth.

"Eye hath not seen, tongue hath not told,
And ear hath not heard it sung,
How buoyant and bold, though it seem to grow old,
Is the heart for ever young!"

Central principles enable a man to feel the pleasures of his past life, as it were, every day; and this, if you will hear the old poet, is to live twice:

"Ampliat ætatis spatium sibi vir bonus: hoc est
Vivere bis, vita posse priore frui †."

Catholicism, notwithstanding all its influence in directing men

* Binney.

† Martial.

towards a future state, seems to wage no harsh war in the name of piety with those human pleasures which can so greatly contribute to sustain the cheerfulness of old age. Sir James Mackintosh, writing to a near relative, and giving him some advice about making a handsome fortune and becoming a much-improved edition of himself, speaks of his own age as being near forty-four, and adds that he can give him "pretty exact news of that dull country towards which he also is travelling." Truly it may be doubted whether the direction of mind of which we are speaking would induce a person through any considerations to regard that period of life, or even one much more advanced, in such a gloomy light. Catholicism, at all events, seems to have no tendency, on religious grounds, to render dull and melancholy the old. Notwithstanding its preparation for the next world, it does not so pervert the judgment of those who hear it rightly as to make them talk wildly to their wrong of this. "True," it says with St. Isidore, "you who desire long life tend to that life for which you are a Christian, that is, to eternal, not to that for your deliverance from which Eternal Life, that is, Christ, descended, the one being vital, the other mortal *." But then, as far as such observers as the stranger can judge from seeing others, it preserves and strengthens a taste for the common pleasures of civilized society as for all natural enjoyments, and sanctions even the secret personal use of those innocent resources of imagination, or of folly, if you will, which prevent the aged mind from losing its cheerful view of life, and which even enable it to appreciate still better the wonders of God in the creation and government of the present world, which is kept in order by such apparently slight, and sometimes what we might fancy unworthy means. The ancient stem with the fresh verdure of spring is not a phenomenon, then, peculiar to the vegetable world. Those aged oaks, with their gnarled trunks and green leaves, present an image of what is found in man—the double beauty of old age and youth. Central principles, the very name of Catholic which belongs to them being exclusive of every thing eccentric, exaggerated, and irrational, by placing man at peace with his Creator, which implies more than mere piety sometimes supposes, with his fellow-creatures, and with himself, appear to allow him freedom to enjoy to the last all that appertains to his richly-endowed nature, all the poetry of life. They seem to enable him to retain his young fancy, his mind's sweet-heart. One might perhaps add that they allow him, as Chateaubriand says, "to call to his succour even dreams, to defend him against that horde of hideous natural fears which are otherwise

engendered in old age, like dragons that hide themselves in ruins."

"——— Oh, you heavenly charmers,
What things you make of us ! For what we lack
We laugh, for what we have are sorry ; still
Are children in some kind."

The knight of Cervantes, seeing himself obliged to renounce his knight-errantry for a season, conceives the idea of reviving the pastoral Arcadia, and proposes turning shepherd, saying, "and so the business will go on as well as heart can wish." We all, perhaps, resemble him on some subjects, conceiving ourselves what we are not ; for who is pleased with what he is ? and unlike your stern philosophy, the central wisdom seems to smile upon the succession of innocent recreations which, like different stages of vantage-ground in an old fortress, are needful to man throughout the warfare of his poor mortality. For though it seems going rather far to say with an English author, that "life is the art of being well deceived," it is certain that a too close examination of the value of our enjoyments will leave nothing for our affections to rest upon ; and oft we find more sweets in one unprofitable dream than in our life's whole pilgrimage. A man is more frequently sad and downhearted from the perishing of some imaginary bliss than from any real cause. A strange conceit hath wrought his malady ; conceits again must bring him to himself. A strict denial to his fancy in this respect belongs more to the cruel scrutiny of the world than to the indulgent spirit of Catholicity, which meddles not with harmless things, but

"—— Dallies with the innocence of thought
Like the old age,"

the observer in consequence feels drawn towards the centre being constrained to recognize the divine wisdom, which in this very respect agrees with the most intimate mysteries of his nature ; for he will say,

"Nor yet is hope so wholly flown,
Nor yet is thought so tedious grown,
But limpid stream and shady tree
Retain, as yet, some sweets for me."

Now all this is nothing else but in a certain sense retaining or recovering youth ; and who will not desire such a good ? In 1512 thousands of soldiers perished in the expedition undertaken by Ponce de Leon for the discovery of the "Fountain of Youth," which was supposed to exist in one of the Bahama islands called Bimini ; but the sole success attainable in such a quest is that which attracts men to the great central truth connected with

the harmony of the universe, which combines thus in one fountain grace and nature.

In fine, one cannot pass along this road without perceiving that the central principles involved in the very word Catholicism conduce to secure for the old a greater share of happiness, and a wider sphere of usefulness, than can belong to their position under any divergent or opposing influence. It is the ancient popular saying, expressive of a general wish,

“De matin montaignes, de soir fontaines.
Matin fault à monter la montaigne ;
Au soir aller à la fontaine.”

But what a happy repose, and what a sweet, refreshing fountain, await the old whom Catholicism leads ! It is a repose fruitful in good to others, abounding in honour for themselves. Philosophers tell us that nothing in nature is exhausted in its first use, and that when a thing seems to have served an end to the uttermost, it is wholly new for an ulterior service. Catholicism in a remarkable degree, when left to its own resources, has the secret of turning thus every thing to account ; and accordingly old age, which without its protection would generally be shoved aside as useless, is employed by it for a variety of purposes. Writers conversant with the manners that it produced in former times treat expressly like the Baron de Puelle on the advantages of old age in the Christian, political, civil, economic, and solitary life. They consider in detail “the sweetness of old age in the administration of public affairs ; the sweetness of old age in fulfilling the duties of civil society ; the sweetness of old age in regard to the economic and domestic life.” It is with men as with trees, the old are found best for some purposes. Old wood is better than young for constructions. At Hinterhermsdorf, in Saxon Switzerland, the roots of aged trees used to be employed in building, and many very ancient houses are still standing there so constructed ; whereas now, in consequence of using young trees, this kind of building does not last thirty years*. Homer dwells repeatedly on the advantage of having old men to conduct public affairs, and to treat on measures of peace ; and Plato even requires that the old should be the rulers in his republic. In the best ancient Christian governments these views were not deemed visionary. The old law of Arragon says, “Bellum aggredi, pacem inire, inducias agere, remve aliam magni momenti pertractare caveto Rex priusquam seniorum annuente consensu †.” The destination of old men as cardinals in the highest council of the world furnishes, no doubt, the most striking instance of the important functions provided for them by the Catholic Church.

* Cotta.

† Hieron. Blanca Arragonens. Rer. Comment. 26.

But besides employing the aged in public affairs, Catholicism evidently tends also to keep alive in the world that ancient sentiment which attached importance to the conversation of the old, as when Socrates says to Cephalus, "And I, too, am always delighted to be in company with old men *." It sends youth to the aged for counsel. "Old age," says the Baron de Puelle, "is of admirable use in regard to assisting men with salutary advice. Few persons can well give admonitions to their neighbour. The great and rich are too powerful; equals are suspected of jealousy; the young would pass for rash; only the aged can at all times perfectly discharge this office." Independent of every other consideration, a mere regard for the experience and personal knowledge of facts that the old man possesses entitles him to attention. William of Newbury consults the aged when writing his history. "William, archbishop of York, being reported," he says, "to have died by poison, I never believed it; but as the report seemed to gain ground, I went to a certain eminent old man, a monk of Rievaulx, then at the point of death, who had been most intimate with the archbishop, and he assured me that it was a falsehood †." We see in the history of Vasari how the aged painters and sculptors of Italy used to be surrounded with young artists consulting them on their works. Amongst the appanages of old age, therefore, which Catholicism confirms, are the instructions of every kind which it gives to those who want its long experience. "The warm days in spring bring forth passion-flowers and forget-me-nots. It is only after midsummer, when the days grow shorter, that fruit is gathered." How valuable are the directions of the aged in regard to studies and learning! "What more charming," asks the Baron de Puelle, "than an old age surrounded by young students listening to its instructions, frequenting its house as an oracle of learning and wisdom, enamoured with its sweet gravity!" Thus the Fathers Fronton, Sirmond, and Petau, without ever appearing in public out of their houses, were sought in their chambers by the first men, who desired to profit by their conversation; and the house of the aged Philippe de Gamache, doctor of Sorbonne, was never empty of prelates and theologians, who sought his instructions, which the Cardinal de Richelieu had often solicited ‡. Catholicism, by thus employing old age in the instruction of youth, attaching the highest importance to its traditions for all men, and generally advising every one to consult it, recommends itself, then, to the judgment of those philosophers who follow Plato and the popular opinion in all countries, rather than the sophists of later times; for Plato said, what indeed the common people, always the best judges in such questions, every where think, that "education is the art of drawing

* De Repub. i.

† i. 26.

‡ De Puelle, 265.

and conducting children towards that end which is declared to be the right one by those old men who have the most wisdom and the greatest experience, and that the object of law, therefore, should be to cause the minds of youth to be accustomed to agree in taste and aversion with old age; and," adds Plato, "it is for this purpose that chants are invented, which are true enchantments, intended to produce this harmony between the young and old *." It is an evil genius which advises youth to quit those trees which gave it shelter, and hasten away to the bleak air of storms. The forest presents some beautiful analogies with the spirit and conduct of Catholicism in respect to this recognition of the use of old age in guiding and sheltering the young; for "experience proves," as Cotta says, "that young wood grows most easily in proximity to old wood, so that in the judicious administration of forests masses of old trees are always left here and there, in order that the new plantations may rise up amongst them †." Spenser takes advantage of such observations, and in his *Shepherd's Calendar* thus exemplifies them by his tale of the oak and the brier, as told by the Shepherd Theriot, who had learned it in his youth from an older man :

"There grew an aged tree on the green,
A goodly Oak sometime had it been,
With arms full strong and largely displayed,
But of their leaves they were disarrayed ;
The body big, and mightily pight,
Thoroughly rooted, and of wondrous height :
Whilom he had been the king of the feild,
And mochel mast to the husband did yeild,
And with his nuts larded many swine ;
But now the grey moss marred his rine ;
His bared boughs were beaten with storms,
His top was bald, and wasted with worms,
His honour decayed, his branches sere.

"Hard by his side grew a bragging Brere,
Which proudly thrust into th' element,
And seemed to threaten the firmament ;
It was embellished with blossoms fair,
And thereto aye wanted to repair
The shepherd's daughters to gather flowers,
To paint their garlands with his colours ;
And in his small bushes used to shrowd
The sweet nightingale, singing so loud ;
Which made this foolish Brere wex so bold,
That on a time he cast him to scold
And sneb the good Oak, for he was old.

* De Legibus, ii.

† Principes fondamentaux de la Science forestière.

"Why stand'st there, quoth he, thou brutish block?
Nor for fruit nor for shadow serves thy stock.
Seest how fresh my flowers been spread,
Dyed in lilly white and crimson red,
With leaves engrained in lusty green,
Colours meet to clothe a maiden queen?
Thy waste bigness but cumpers the ground,
And dirks the beauty of my blossoms round ;

"The mouldy moss which thee accloyeth
My cinnamon smell too much annoyeth :
Wherefore soon, I rede thee, hence remove,
Lest thou the price of my displeasure prove.
So spake this bold Brere with great disdain ;
Little him answered the Oak again ;
But yielded, with shame and grief adowed
That of a weed he was over-crowed.

"It chanced after upon a day
The husbandman's self to come that way,
Of custom to suvieu his ground
And his trees of state in compass round ;
Him, when the spiteful Brere had espied,
He causeless complained, and loudly cried
Unto his Lord, stirring up stern strife ;—

"O my liege lord ! the God of my life,
Please of you pond your suppliant's plaint,
Caused of wrong and cruel constraint,
Which I your poor vassal daily endure ;
And, but your goodness the same secure,
Am like for desperate dole to die,
Through felonous force of mine enemy.

"Greatly aghast with this piteous plea,
Him rested the goodman on the lea,
And bade the Brere in his plaint proceed.
With painted words tho gan this proud weed
(As most usen ambitious folk)
His coloured crime with craft to cloak :—
Ah, my sovereign ! lord of creatures all,
Thou placer of plants both humble and tall,
Was not I planted of thine own hand,
To be the primrose of all thy land,
With flowering blossoms to furnish the prime,
And scarlet berries in summer time ?
How falls it then that this faded Oak,
Whose body is scree, whose branches broke,
Whose naked arms stretch unto the fire,
Unto such tyranny doth aspire.
Hindering with his shade my lively light,
And robbing me of the sweet sun's sight ?

So beat his old boughs my tender side,
That oft the blood springeth from woundes wide,
Untimely my flowers forced to fall,
That been the honour of your coronal ;
And oft he lets his canker-worms light
Upon my branches, to work me more spite,
And oft his hoary locks down doth cast,
Wherewith my fresh flowrets been defast.
For this, and many more such outrage
Crave I your goodlyhead to assuage
The rancorous rigour of his might :
Nought ask I but only to hold my right,
Submitting me to your good sufferance,
And praying to be guarded from grievance.

“ To this the Oak cast him to reply
Well as he couth, but his enemy
Had kindled such coals of displeasure,
That the goodman nould stay his leisure,
But home him hasted with furious heat,
Increasing his wrath with many a threat ;
His harmful hatchet he bent in hand
(Alas ! that it so ready should stand !)
And to the field alone he speedeth
(Aye little help to harm there needeth)
Anger nould let him speak to the tree,
Enaunter his rage mould cooled be,
But to the root bent his sturdy stroke,
And made many wounds in the wasted Oak ;
The axe's edge did oft turn again,
As half unwilling to cut the grain ;
Seemed the senseless iron did fear,
Or to wrong holy eld did forbear ;
For it had been an ancient tree,
Sacred with many a mystery,
And often crossed with the priest's crew,
And often hallowed with holy water due ;
But like fancies weren foolery,
And broughten this oak to this misery ;
For nought mought they quitten him from decay ;
For fiercely the goodman at him did lay.
The block oft groaned under his blow,
And sighed to see his near overthrow ;
In fine the steel had pierced his peth ;
Tho down to the ground he fell therewith.
His wondrous weight made the ground to quake.
The earth sunk under him, and seemed to shake ;
There lieth the Oak, pitied of none.
Now stands the Brere like a lord alone,
Puffed up with pride and vain pleasance :
But all this glee had no continuance ;

For eftsoons winter gan to approach,
 The blustering Boreas did encroach
 And beat upon the solitary Brere,
 For now no succour was seen him near.
 Now gan he repent his pride too late ;
 For, naked left and desolate,
 The biting frost nipt his stalk dead,
 The watery wet weighed down his head,
 And heaped snow burthened him so sore
 That now upright he can stand no more ;
 And, being down, is trod in the dirt
 Of cattle, and brouzed, and sorely hurt.
 Such was the end of this ambitious Brere,
 For scorning eld."

Central principles associated in their completest form of Catholicity can attract the old, then, by a consideration that they not only teach men to recognize the services which their age is capable of rendering, but also that they tend to ameliorate its condition in every respect, by securing for it the veneration and love of those with whom it is surrounded, and who, on seeing it, may cry, "Ay, here's the ground whereon my filial faculties must build an edifice of honour or of shame to all mankind." This, again, is an instance of adherence to the ancient sentiments of humanity. "I respect your age," says Orestes, "the sight of your grey hairs fills me with veneration, and prevents me from speaking." Pliny, even in his forest wanderings, seems to be thinking about what service he can render the old ; for when treating on trees he fails not to distinguish those which, by the lightness of their wood, furnish the best staffs for aged men*. It would be very significative to remark the tender solicitude evinced towards the old, wherever Catholicity sways a people. As the oaks upon the Cap de Buch, in La Guienne, nearly surrounded by sea, are only kept alive by means of the maritime pines which shelter them ; or, as stumps of white pines, which have been cut down, continue to grow, by means, as some think, of root nourishment received by the stump from a neighbouring living tree of the same species, the roots of which have become united with those of the cut tree by their having grown together ; so are the old of human kind kept fresh at the heart, and often flourishing externally by the sheltering care and generous prodigality of those who have been taught and formed by the old instructions of Catholicism, long since passed into nature, and who feel it to be their holiest duty to tend and love them. How many, too, within the stricter sphere of this influence, devote themselves, like St. Mechthild, to visit and tend the aged and in-

* Nat. Hist. lib. xiii. 42.

firm, even when personally unconnected with them! "Since old age," say the hermits of Camaldoli, "is a perpetual sickness, the aged must be tenderly cherished; and therefore all the fathers are exhorted in the bowels of Jesus Christ to show themselves full of regard, and humanity, and compassion for the old; and those who act otherwise are to be punished severely*." "He who has attained the fiftieth year of profession," says Ingulph, speaking of the different classes of monks in England, "shall be called a *Sempecta*, and he shall have a good chamber assigned to him by the prior in the infirmary; and he shall have an attendant or servant especially appointed to wait on him, who shall receive from the abbot an allowance of provision, the same in mode and measure as is allowed for the servant of a knight in the abbot's hall. To the *sempecta* the prior shall every day assign a companion, as well for the instruction of the junior as for the solace of the senior; and their meals shall be supplied to them from the infirmary kitchen, according to the allowance for the sick. As to the *sempecta* himself, he may sit or walk, or go in or go out, according to his own will and pleasure. He may go in and out of the choir, the cloister, the refectory, the dormitory, and the other offices of the monastery, with or without a frock, how and when he pleases. Nothing unpleasant respecting the concerns of the monastery shall be talked of before him. Nobody shall vex him about any thing; but in the most perfect peace and quietness of mind he shall wait for his end†." Such was the condition of old age in the cloister. What must it have been in the kind home where central principles were ever in action, to secure as far as possible domestic tenderness? Hence, the poet of a country still greatly influenced by Catholicism says,

" ——— pour garder toujours la beauté de son âme,
 Pour se remplir le cœur, riche ou pauvre, homme ou femme,
 De pensers bienveillants,
 Vous avez ce qu'on peut, après Dieu, sur la terre,
 Contempler de plus saint et de plus salutaire,
 Un père en cheveux blancs!"

Beautifully does a poet, too, in a London popular journal, express the ancient sentiment in regard to age:

"I love the old, to lean beside
 The antique, easy chair,
 And pass my fingers softly o'er
 A wreath of silvered hair;

* Constitut. Eremit. Camaldulensis, c. 7.

† Ap. Maitland, *The Dark Ages*.

To press my glowing lips upon
The furrow'd brow, and gaze
Within the sunken eye, where dwells
The 'lights of other days.'

"To fold the pale and feeble hand
That on my youthful head
Has lain so tenderly, the while
The evening prayer was said.
To nestle down close to the heart,
And marvel how it held
Such tomes of legendary lore,
The chronicles of Eld.

"Oh ! youth, thou hast so much of joy,
So much of life, and love,
So many hopes ; Age has but one—
The hope of bliss above.
Then turn awhile from these away
To cheer the old and bless
The wasted heart-spring with a stream
Of gushing tenderness.

"Thou treadest now a path of bloom,
And thine exulting soul
Springs proudly on, as tho' it mocked
At Time's unfelt control.
But they have march'd a weary way,
Upon a thorny road,
Then soothe the toil-worn spirits, 'ere
They pass away to God.

"Yes, love the aged—bow before
The venerable form,
So soon to seek beyond the sky
A shelter from the storm.
Aye, love them ; let thy silent heart,
With reverence untold,
As pilgrims very near to Heaven,
Regard and love the old."

Thoughtful and observant minds have been impressed with a painful sense of contrast when they looked around them, in the absence of central principles, and, wherever faith seemed to be eclipsed, with all the sentiments that are gathered round it, surveyed the condition of the old. Reverence once had wont to wait on age ; formerly, as we have seen, the old man resembled the oak, which is not left solitary in its declining years ; bright green mosses growing about its venerable roots. It is no longer generally so, where central principles have yielded to antagonistic influences. Stained with no crime, yet "that which should accompany old age—as honour, love, obedience, troops of

friends," they whose life has fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf, must not look there to have. Rooks generally cease to build their nests in aged trees which are in danger of falling before the force of winds that they have no longer sufficient strength to withstand. They forsake them; and the grove that once used to resound with their voices is silent. A similar desertion can be observed when we pass near the old persons who had only such chattering birds for their former friends and dependants. As if afraid of their company, and of being somehow compromised in their approaching end, they all, as if instinctively, fly elsewhere. The dramatic poets, who studied manners, and who lived shortly after the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, seem to entertain a very decided opinion as to its results in robbing old age of its honours. They say,

"——— There was a time,
(And pity 'tis, so good a time had wings
To fly away,) when reverence was paid
To a grey head; 'twas held a sacrilege
Not expiable, to deny respect
To one of years and gravity."

There is hardly one of these writers who does not make the same remark. Ben Jonson expresses his impressions thus,—“I cannot leave to admire the change of manners and the breeding of our youth, within the kingdom since myself was one. When I was young age was authority, and a man had then a certain reverence paid unto his years, that had none due unto his life: so much the sanctity of some prevailed for others. But now we all are fallen.” Such results, indeed, were but natural, since, as we may learn, even from the interlude of *Lusty Juventus* written in the reign of Edward VI., many of the rising generation were New Gospellers. The old, for their tenacity in regard to the ancient religion, had been held up to ridicule on the stage, which had been made a supplement to the pulpit. In that piece, the devil is introduced lamenting the downfall of superstition, and saying,—

“The olde people would beleve still in my lawes,
But the yonger sort leade them a contrary way;
They will not beleve, they playnly say,
In old traditions, and made by men,
But they wyll lyve as the Scripture teacheth them.”

“The father was then a foole, and the chyld a preacher.”

But without recurring to the extravagances of those revolutionary times, it is evident that whenever the old sentiments of humanity involved in the central faith yield place to the spirit of

innovation in morals, the old tree of all forsaken, is a symbol of the fate which is reserved for the human sire. "Cruel son! How canst thou rip a heart that's cleft already with injuries of time?" Such complaints are not then fantastic. The psalmist pronounced blessed the man whose many children enabled him to meet his enemies at his gate without being confounded; but perhaps then it is when these very children come to it that the old man has greatest cause to feel overwhelmed, and to tremble. "You no longer respect the old," says a senator addressing his countrymen at an epoch when society seemed to abandon generally the Christian faith; "their words," he adds, "are lost upon you. This, you scornfully reply, is a brave world when a man should be selling land, and not be learning manners." Lands and houses at least obtain no exemption now from having belonged to a father. A friend of the stranger, the learned and accomplished Count de l'Escalopier, possesses the house in the Place-Royale at Paris, which has descended to him from father to son since the year 1612. But these were sons who used to remain standing while their aged parents spoke to them. "In the time of my youth," says another eminent philosopher of the same nation, "old age was a dignity, now it is a burden. Old persons formerly were less unhappy and less isolated than now. If they had lost their friends, little else had changed round them. They were not strangers to society. At present, one belated in the world has not only seen die men, but ideas. Principles, manners, tastes, pleasures, pains, sentiments—nothing resembles what he has known." That some ideas, some laws, some manners, some pleasures and tastes should change would cause regret to no wise old men; but what they will justly deplore, as a consequence of renouncing central principles, is the passing away of old virtues that are indispensable to the peace of their own condition, and to the goodness of those who are connected with them. Yes, there are inhuman whisperings now in many houses of the rich. Sons may not consult astrologers, as in the days of Juvenal, to ascertain how much longer parents are likely to be a burden to them. There may not be a statute, as in Ephesus, favouring unnatural heirs, which declares that every man living to fourscore years, and woman to threescore, shall then be cut off as useless to the republic, and that law shall finish what nature lingered at; but complaints are not less heard which recall what was represented by the dramatist of a corrupt age in England:—

"O lad, here's a spring for young plants to flourish!
The old trees must down that keep the sun from us."

They who are old may say with the Greek poet, "We bring an accusation against this state, for instead of tenderness and pro-

vision at the end of our days, we experience neglect obdurate and rude. You exclude us from your councils; we are as nothing. Is it just that a man bent under the weight of years should yield to every stripling? Old age obtains from you neither veneration nor repose."

"Oh, time of age! where's that Æneas now,
Who letting all his jewels to the flames;
Forgetting country, kindred, treasure, friends,
Fortunes and all things, save the name of son,
Hew'd out his way through blood, through fire, through arms,
Even all the arm'd streets of bright-burning Troy,
Only to save a father?"

All this is to no purpose, some will reply. We are past school, or we need no Pagan lessons read! Catholicism, meanwhile, to inculcate respect and gratitude for age, has but one voice, of which the ancient poet is an echo, saying,—

"Does the kind root bleed out his livelihood
In parent distribution to his branches,
Adorning them with all his glorious fruits,
Proud that his pride is seen when he's unseen;
And must not gratitude descend again
To comfort his old limbs in fruitless winter?
O yet in noble man reform, reform it,
And make us better than those vegetives,
Whose souls die with them *."

In fine, central principles provide for age a sweet, serene, and even glorious existence, corresponding to

"The setting sun, and music at the close
As the last taste of sweets is sweetest last."

Or, as another poet says,—

"A long summer day, whose shadow shall go down
Like the sunset in the eastern clime, that never knows a frown."

When the sun is descending near the horizon, the very dust that rises from the road seems golden; and as the traveller looks forward through it the ground appears to blend into the brightness of heaven. Such is life in the aged, whom faith inspires.

"For as Apollo each eve doth devise
A new apparelling for western skies,"

so Catholicism, which leaves the varieties of natural character untouched, lends an inexhaustible change of beauty to the declining days of each old person subject to it, and makes the last

scene appear to be more lovely than the best and serenest that had been observed before. It invokes a smiling, calm, contented old age, as some great artist calls on *Vesper*—

“To summon all the downiest clouds together
For the sun’s purple couch.”

Upon the whole, Catholicism, when unmixed with other influences, is found to wear well ; under its fostering warmth the old can look on young men, and no way envy their delicious health, pleasure, and strength ; all which were once their own, while what they experience now must one day be theirs. After serving them in youth as a beautiful lightsome holiday attire, they find nothing like it to cover them in age ; it is found to become them best at every stage of their journey ; it is a suit that will last them their lives, and one which, once obtained, secures them against all further want of change. The man who passes, growing old, remarks the fact, and sometimes suffers himself in consequence to be led by that observation to the centre. He perceives how few who turn from it know how to be old. He hears magnified acquiescence in mere nature. He will reply with a poet,—

“There’s truth in what you say ;
But something whispers to my heart
That, as we downward tend,
Lycoris ! life requires an art
To which our souls must bend.”

That art, he concludes, can be nothing else but the acquirement of central principles in mind and conduct, such as form old men to this type of indulgent wisdom ; accordingly, he studies and embraces them, and then feels his mind seated in a rich throne of endless quiet, higher than mortality, and pure as heaven.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROAD OF OLD AGE (*terminated*).



FROM this point opens another avenue to the centre, constituted by the natural affinity between old age and Catholicism. The existence of this relationship is easily detected. In the first place, a period of life generally productive of leisure and of thought, attended in many instances with a vast variety of retrospective images, must be favourable to a recognition of the truth of

that religion which, while often powerless to persuade the busy and inconsiderate, can never be wholly removed from view of the contemplative, or separated from the historical knowledge and traditions of those who, having achieved the silver livery of advised age, are arrived at their reverence and their chair-days, and who, after paying their debt of labour, find a repose which suits them, and which God blesses—a rest which, as Lacordaire says, is at once their right and their majesty. Mark these seniors seated on the benches which sometimes are placed at the outskirts of a forest, or by the side of the road leading through it, as in that of St. Germain. You perceive how they like its shades; since they even have turned their backs to those who pass in order to have their faces directed to the wood. To prevent old age from considering and meditating when those who pass would lead it from the centre, is indeed the object of some, who like wagtails of the city, as Shirley calls them, no sooner hear the name of Rome but straight they gape as they would eat the pope—birds, however, that the old when contemplative are not inclined to make much on. But to think of banishing all thoughtfulness from those so predisposed to it, is to desire what would be unnatural.

“—— For what is age
But the holy place of life, chapel of ease
For all men’s wearied miseries? and to rob
That of her ornament it is accurst
As from a priest to steal a holy vestment *.”

“Years,” says Chateaubriand, “are like alps. Hardly have you passed the first when you see others rise beyond them—alas! these highest and last mountains are solitary and white.” But he would admit that they are favourable to reflection, and that they yield a wide and uninterrupted prospect to supply it with abundant matter for its exercise. Dante borrows an image from those who stand on such an elevation, saying,—

“So rov’d my ken, and in its general form
All paradise survey’d.”

It is they who have longest observed and longest meditated, who can most easily perceive that, as he says,

“—— All is one beam
Reflected from the summit of the first
That moves, which being hence and vigour takes †.”

But memory, again, with the aged may prove a serviceable guide; since the days of youth can seldom have been left without

fresh evidence of the truth of central principles, yielded in a personal manner with new examples of the evil of disregarding them; and therefore with especial reference to such things each old man might say,

“—— Multaque præsens
Tempore tam longo vidi, multa auribus hausi *.”

Or with Nestor,

“—— Quamvis obstet mihi longa vetustas
Multaque me fugiant primis spectacula sub annis
Plura tamen memini †.”

Helvius Marcia Formianus, when very old, accusing Libo before the censors, and Pompey, in disparagement of his years, saying that he had come from the dead to accuse, “You are right, Pompey,” he replied, “I come from the dead to accuse Libo; but while staying with them I saw Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus stained with blood and weeping, because nobly born, of innocent life, and a lover of his country, he had been slain in the flower of his youth by your orders. I saw the wounded Brutus, victim of your cruelty. I saw Cn. Carbo, the defender of your boyhood and of your father’s goods, bound in chains by your command and slain, against all law and justice. I saw the prætorian man, Perperna, execrating your barbarity ‡.” One who returns thus from the dead even in our age, however reluctant he may be to accuse, has somewhat perhaps to recount of the sufferings to which the profession of Catholicity had exposed some of the best and greatest men. Without the least disposition to blame any one, or to revive odious memories for the sake of reproaching the living, he, a modern Formianus, might say to his intimate friend, “I have seen a Douglas, a bishop, tried for his life on the charge of saying mass, and only saved by an ingenious stratagem of Mansfield, the judge,—Æmonii proceres aderant, aderamur et ipsi. I have seen London on the point of being burnt and pillaged by those who, at the voice of a fanatical nobleman invoking the Bible, accused the king of favouring popery. I have seen a little later the whole clergy of France embracing death or exile rather than take an oath opposed to Catholicism. I have seen nations pledged to wage what they proclaimed as an eternal war against it; but I have seen them,” he will add, “disappointed and baffled.”

“For know, that all these strict combined heads,
Which struck against this mine of diamonds,
Have proved but glassen hammers—they are broken.”

Dugald Stewart supposes that the decay of memory observable in old men proceeds as frequently from the very little interest they take in what is passing around them, as from any bodily decay by which their powers of mind are weakened. That interest, however, which they take in the past may conduce greatly, for reasons already suggested, to their facility of access to the centre. The Greek poet celebrates the force of memory in old age*; and Catholicism, it must be confessed, is more or less wound up with nearly all memories, whether of peace or war, of commerce or diplomacy, of law or literature, of love or of devotion. The natural impression of the aged, resulting from familiarity with the past, will be in favour of standing, so far as religious principles are concerned, on the ancient ways, and of walking in them. "Standum," they will say, "super semitas antiquas, et in eis ambulandum—ita sane jucundum ac suave intra castissimos sacræ vetustatis limites libere se coarctare†." If religion should have lost the favour and protection of the state and of the times, they will not lose their former attachment to it. Their faith will not diminish on that account,

"—— But as the wild ivy
Spreads and thrives better in some piteous ruin
Of tower, or defaced temple, than it does
Planted by a new building, so will they
Make its adversity their instrument
To wind them up into a full content."

Manhood, for a while, may jeer and scoff at reverent antiquity in matters of religion, but age replies, "You but blow out a taper that would light your understanding, though you may think that it is burnt down in the socket." Shirley, ridiculing the spirit of the reformers, makes Maslin say, "Let me see, how shall I consume my wealth? I must do something to shame the chronicles. Silence! I'll build another town in every country; in midst of that a most magnificent college, to entertain men of most eminent wit, to invent new religions;" and Beaumont and Fletcher represent Pedant applying to Forobosco, a conjurer, to help him in a similar project. "I am a schoolmaster, sir," he says, "and would fain confer with you about erecting four new sects of religion at Amsterdam. I assure you I would get a great deal of money by it. It is about these four new sects I come to you; 'tis a devil of your raising must invent 'em; I confess I am too weak to compass it. Let but your devil set them a-foot once, I have weavers, and gingerbread-makers, and mighty aquavitæ men, shall set them a-going." Though "the times may want religion extremely," old age will not pronounce these

* Herc. furens.

† Regula Fratrum Ord. SS. Trinit.

projects excellent. Nothing, in its judgment, can equal the folly of a man making a religion, or taking up that of another man's making. Catholicism, on the other hand, will always appear to it to be like a great work of nature, which one has only to accept as one finds it, wonder at it as much as one may. The natural office of the old is not to invent or sanction invention in this sphere, but to keep lighted the torch of traditional wisdom as of faith; and unless extraordinary circumstances prevent them, they are generally faithful to pass it to others burning,—“*Et quasi cursores vitæ lampada trahunt.*”

In the second place, old age being favourable to natural devotion, must consequently enjoy an exemption from many obstacles in the way of proceeding to the centre. St. Augustin compares old age to the aurora; and the Baron de Prelle, after citing his words, proceeds to develop the idea, saying, “It is, in fact, the dawn of that eternal day which is to be enjoyed in the future life; and as the aurora dissipates the darkness of night, so age corrects the passions, and prepares man for the pure joy of everlasting felicity.” Those “painted flies that with man’s summer take life and heat, buzzing about his blossoms, and which, when growing full, turn to caterpillars, gnawing the root that gave them life—are unable to do harm in the clear, pure atmosphere of age. In manhood the mind is often so much occupied with private, or professional, or public affairs, that all thoughts about matters relating to another existence are excluded; whereas, on growing old, men are frequently found to follow advice like that of Alanus, saying,—

“*Aufer ab his mentem, miserosque videto dolores
Altera plus istis sunt meditanda tibi.*”

There are men who, having long slept in the dull lethargy of lost security, can only be awakened and moved to take a central direction by the preaching of “that bold missionary with a white beard, called Time.” At that voice “truth comes naked and sabre-like against the heart:” a sense of earthly mutability then seems at last to rouse them. They say to themselves, like the poet, “The forests, rocks, fields, rivers, and shores—all created things are changed by time. At present this life, which flies, and the place and time teach me another path—that which leads to heaven, where one gathers fruits, and not flowers and leaves alone. I seek, and it is time I should seek, another love, another light, and another way across other heights to mount to heaven.”

“The almond-tree and the pear-tree,” says Pliny, “are most

fruitful in old age*." "The wild pear-trees," say foresters, "when hollow, ought to be let to stand till the winds overthrow them; for when hollow thus and old they bear more fruit, and are more profitable for the pasture of animals†." On the road from Martel to Gramat is to be seen a colossal walnut-tree at least three hundred years old. It is only fifty-five feet high, but it sends out immense lateral branches, and bears on an average each year fifteen sacks of walnuts. Observations of this kind made in the woods supply, therefore, many analogies with the phenomena of human life, which in old age can be very productive in its forests of piety, of which no one can be long at a loss to find the true, natural, and central root. "Crescit ætate pulchritudo animorum," says Antonio Perez, "quantum minuitur eorundem corporum venustas." Johnson, with all his love for the young, had the same conviction, while Montaigne and Lord Chesterfield, differing in this respect from the opinion of observant men in all ages, expressed the contrary. "Mystic authors teach," says Father Baker, "that the soul will hardly arrive unto the active union and experimental perception of God's presence in her, till almost a declining age—since till such age there will remain too much unstableness in the inward senses, which will hinder that quietness and composedness of mind necessary to such a union‡." The old, being thus led by natural piety towards a divine state, can hardly fail to see fall before them many obstacles that interpose between others and the issue to that centre where religion, from the beginning of the world, has been found. It may be expected that in the absence of extraordinary causes to bias their opinions, they will deem it no great mistake if men should feel disposed to comply with the oracular voice and seek their ancient mother. But he who, in a spiritual sense, repeats words like those of Apollo,

"Qui petere antiquam matrem cognataque jussit
Littora,"

tells you, in fact, to seek that original universal society which, after passing from its patriarchal and Jewish forms, was constituted in a more spiritual sense by the apostles, and propagated throughout the whole world by their successors; therefore, in regard to its facility for acquiescing in the divine method of instructing men in religion, old age may be seen to have affinity with Catholicism, which has always existed for the same purpose of saving mankind by other means besides private reading and private judgment, so that—

* N. H. xvi. 50.

† Burgsdorf, Manuel forestier.

‡ Sancta Sophia, 33.

“—— Till the Future dares
Forget the Past, its tale and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity.”

Again, old age being favourable to wisdom, possesses obviously a great advantage in regard to the facility of recognizing the central truth.

In the forest of life it is the snares of hunters which render the ways dangerous for intelligences, since all the senses can be more or less employed to capture them. As they advance towards the centre, there are pit-falls dug on this side, and wires laid skilfully on that, so that the young and careless can often become a prey to error's emissaries, the cause of whose zeal will ever be a mystery ; but to the aged it is not so easy to misrepresent things that relate to religion or the interests of a future life. All old animals are much more sagacious, and with much more difficulty caught in traps than young animals. An old wolf or an old fox will walk round a trap twenty times, examining every circumstance with the utmost attention, and those who deceive them are only enabled to do so by using every possible care and circumspection. So it is with these old men, when invited to stop and yield assent to novelties in religion. Thus there is a trap laid in some places to discourage all from proceeding to the centre, by representing those who pass to its sphere as perverse young persons, who forsake the religion of their noble country, pernicious spirits, and men of pestilent purpose, meanly affected unto the state they live in, whose fortunes should be crossed, endeavours frustrated, and antagonists thanked by all the great men of the time for breeding jealousies of them throughout the nation ; but the old observer, even where the light may rather seem to steal in than be permitted, goes round this trap, and says, Though in these cases you are in labour to push names, ancient love, kindred out of your memory, and in the self-same place to seat something you would confound, I can detect in those who so offend you a spirit that may be qualified very differently ; for though absolute sense in every thing, and above all moderation, is not to be expected from every little goose who sacrifices friends, and, for aught he knows or cares at the time, perhaps fortune, through a chivalrous feeling of honour, I think it is through horror of injustice, and detestation of despotism, and aversion to the spirit of contradiction, and unwillingness to be singular and unlike the commonalty, that these youths, making past times present, have chosen to remain faithful to the old religion, and adhere with the common people and those who were the best and most generous of the land to the faith that was first delivered to the country of Bede and Alfred. They merely think, as it is very natural at their age to think, that because the policy of an old queen, long since dead and

gone, to strengthen her tottering power required her throwing herself into the revolutionary movement of the sixteenth century, it by no means follows that after three hundred years they, young men and women who have no crowns to secure, should put on her bandages to hoodwink themselves, espouse with passion a cause that holds out no good end to serve, and spend the whole of their lives endeavouring to twist every thing awry in order to make facts appear to square with the views of religion which she, Henry VIII.'s daughter, established in England by persecuting and unjust laws. These young persons then, he will add, are like rivulets that appear vagabond, and yet are only making their way to the ocean.

"Though streams from springs seem runaways to be,
'Tis nature leads them to their mother sea."

Is it not Protestant statesmen themselves who tell us that what "has been christened a national church is something very different, and that oligarchy is not liberty?" Are we not told by the same observer, that the tide of time is carrying the youth of England to the same conclusion? "Yes, yes," he will continue, "thou mayst swim against the stream with the crab, and feed against the wind with the deer, and peck against the steel with the cockatrice; but stars are to be looked at, not reached at." So the experienced wayfarer escapes the snare, and thus one perceives that age is not altogether ignorant, though many an old justice is so. Again, there is a little wicket to work wise men like wires through at, and draw their minds and bodies into cobwebs, by representing what an unfortunate schism substituted as all perfection, and every stain of violence and exaggeration as something foreign to it, which, instead of obeying, resists such influences; so that error is dressed up to act a victim to the very passions which are its own ministers; but old experienced men are not so quickly caught with joined hands. Pop goes the weasel. They know that they cannot be too cantelous, nice, or dainty in some circles, and they warn those who come raw from the university, before experience has hardened them a little, that as a buttered loaf is a scholar's breakfast there, so a poached scholar is a cheater's dinner here,—calling him poached as pouring himself out to the first comer, stript of his shell, and ready to be swallowed by the crafty. To their decoyers, therefore, who thought they had caught the old ones, they reply in the words of our ancient dramatist,—

"You pull your claws in now, and fawn upon us,
As lions do to entice poor foolish beasts;
And beasts we should be too, if we believed you;
Go, exercise your art —."

You speak of your glorious principles opposed to what religious antiquity revered—but the goodness of a man never taught these

principles. From the bee you have taken not the honey, but the wax, to make your religion, framing it to the time, not to the truth *;” for some things of error are exalted by our bold belief, when princes make themselves but merry with their servants, who are apt to antedate their honour and expound in their own flattery the text of princes. He will add, perhaps, with the Count de Maistre, alluding to a case where these princes were too much in earnest, “There is no great harm that this establishment should be flogged by her children, since that is the best way of making her acknowledge that she has brought them up badly.” So the old observer leaves it to others to run their necks into this noose, deeming it strange if any should do so in an age like the present, when they may hear even Protestants say with the author of *Sibyl*, that “Time, which brings all things, has brought also to the mind of England some suspicion that the idols which they have so long worshipped, and the oracles that have so long deluded them, are not the true ones, and that faith is not a delusion.” Princes are fading things, so are their favours. He, at all events, will decline to meddle with them. There is another wire again to entangle those who pass, by representing the abuses of Catholicism as Catholicism itself, but your ancient is not to be caught so easily; he is not in the noose; for he has learnt what use the pearl is of, which dunghill cocks scrape into dirt again. His searching judgment distinguishes, and he says, Friend, I would not have you with the lark play yourself into a day net. True, he sees abuses, and revolting abuses, but he sees also that it is not for the purpose of creating these abuses that the instruments employed by Catholicism are designed; and that it is not for those persons to cure us who seem so little able to refine themselves. If the tree be blasted that blossoms, the fault is in the wind and not in the root. The fly may buzz about the candle; he shall but singe his wings when all’s done. Strabo says that it was the law in a certain region of India, that if a person discovered any deadly poison in the woods, and did not also find a remedy for it, he should be put to death; but that if he found the latter as well, that he should be honoured by kings †. If Catholicism had, on the one hand, introduced hypocrisy, false asceticism, proud exclusiveness, contempt for the laws of nature, sanctimonious intrigue; and, on the other, sacrilege and the spirit of despising all holy things as having known the utmost; if it had generated only persons of a devotion without humanity to represent religion, and such men of fashion as the Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistones, to represent the laity of its formation and approval—men who spend their time in hunting and

* Lilly’s *Campepe*.

† Lib. xv. 22.

drinking, without one idea beyond those heroic occupations, and who are in labour to catch the vices while execrating the virtues of every opponent to their faith,—if it had done only this, without at the same time having disclosed and offered the remedy for these evils, the specific, which only the grossest natures, that would be no ornament to any cause, can wholly resist, it might deserve to incur the punishment awarded by a similar law within the domain of morals ; but the remedy has been not alone pointed out but supplied by it ; and therefore, concludes the old adviser, it is the honours, not the penalties, of kings that are its due. There is, again, a snare analogous laid by men who would repair old Tyburn and make it cedar, pretending all the while that Catholics are intolerant, and showing horrible consequences from the doctrine of the oneness of truth ; but although Protestantism looks with nature's eye upon itself, which needs no perspective to reach, nor art of any optic to make greater, itself being still nearest to itself, there is another eye that looks abroad and walks in search of reason and the weight of things. You thought you had found a hare, but 'tis a fox, an old fox. The aged explorer, looking thus at the circling net, rejects the bait spread to entice the foolish, and recognizes the injustice of the imputation ; for he will say, You imagine you have caught me now, and that I think myself concerned in this wretched character ; but I tell thee, thou dost not reach a Catholic ; 'tis a name three heavens above thy soul to understand. Catholicism is not exactly what the tendency of the present times seems calculated to make it : intellectual moderation and tolerance form its spirit. It distinguishes between simple persons born in error, and its crabbed, wilful, reckless inventors and propagators. The Church, as far as the stranger durst speak on such a theme, pronounces no one criminal for being in a state of involuntary ignorance, nor does it place very narrow limits to the sphere in which such ignorance may exist ; and as for past times, and the conduct even of states themselves which were Catholic, your man of ripe judgment will say, as Apelles replied to Alexander, " If you will paint as a king, your majesty may begin and end where you please ; but as you would be a painter, you must begin with the face ;" and so remember what is prominent in history as the countenance in man, namely, that the Catholics had all the power when the idea first started up in the world that there could be two modes of faith ; and that it was much more natural they should attempt to crush this innovation by great efforts, than that the Protestants should rage against those who differed from them, when the very basis of their system, as they pretended, was complete freedom in all spiritual matters.

Again, there is a trap laid in the newspaper notion so profoundly false that Protestantism opens a wider field for the understanding to expatiate in, and that central principles contract and enslave it; but its contrivers have not that gift of persuasion, in regard to the old at least, which Goethe remarks in the characters of Sophocles, who, he says, are all so endowed with it that the audience will almost always take the part of the last speaker. The old wayfarer is not spell-bound by their eloquence, but in reply he says, "No such baits for me, sir, no fish-hooks, no gins, no nooses, no pit-falls to catch puppies, purblind puppies." He has learned by experience that while it is a groundless assertion to say that the latter are contrary to any legitimate use of our faculties, the former tries to pass off for free inquiry a mere unprofitable spirit of disputing in matters that are wholly above our reach, whereby are divided and separated into hostile camps those who would be otherwise free to combine for noble and useful ends like one family. Now he hates that false liberty which sets unprofitable debate and odious strife among us all, that plague, worse in his judgment than every other sent upon the earth, which doth assume a light and fiery shape, and so for ever lives within the world, diving into women's thoughts, into men's hearts; raising up false rumours, and suspicious fears; putting strange inventions into each man's mind, meriting no other name but fearful jealousy. What horror, he exclaims, encompasses me, and disturbs the peace so many sat enthroned in! Shall dissension ruin eternal acts? Hath the great Deity made an instrument of peace, and shall its power be slighted so by this rebellious difference? Cease, mutiny, or be your own destruction, vile confusion, that neglects the power God and nature hath prescribed, scattering into sections thus fellow-countrymen, parents, children, lovers, all in spite of nature, fearing, suspecting, and misrepresenting one another! Are Master Wrangle, Lady Tangle, or the Doctor Troublearo, displeased at such a state of things? In faith, sir, no; but, continues a calm old man, the Catholic does not create or favour it; he is not the man who advocates and perpetuates, but who is opposed to this hateful reign of strife, and therefore am I, for one, inclined to yield him the preference; and as for the contemptuous darts which some level at Catholicism, on the ground of its supposed servility, their words move me as much

"As if a goose should play the porcupine,
And dart her plumes, thinking to pierce my breast."

Thus, if there are snares every where laid, if there are never wanting those who lie in wait to wound with the darts of error all who are approaching to the blessed shore,—as Dante says,—

"The new and inexperienced bird awaits,
Twice it may be, or thrice, the fowler's aim;
But in the sight of one whose plumes are full
In vain the net is spread, the arrow wing'd *."

He who resembles Lelex,

"—— *Animo maturus et ævo;*"

or Cato in his eighty-sixth year, so far as retaining memory, energy, and eloquence, "*quia omnia ista in statu suo æquali ac perpetua industria continebat,*" will not be the man most easily persuaded to assent to those propositions and accusations which are urged against central truths. "As men advance in life," says Chateaubriand, "they assume the equity of that future which approaches." They learn the advantage of proceeding to explanation before they proceed to blame. One of the rarest sort of understandings we meet with in the world, among the numerous diversities which are produced, says an able observer, is an understanding fairly and impartially open to the reception of truth, coming in any shape and from any quarter. The first impulse of men of abilities, if they are young, is too often to contradict; or if the manners of the world have cured them of that, to listen only with attentive ears, but with most obdurate and unconquerable entrails. Age ought to be favourable to impartiality; it may be expected to lend an ear to truth, let its advocates be called by what name they may, and, at all events, it tends to check, not alone from the teeth outwardly, but within, the contradictory disposition. Moreover, on moral and religious subjects the old may be supposed to see clearer, inasmuch as it is impossible for the judgment not to have received some benefit from long experience of mankind. To the connexion between central principles and all human interests—to their universal bearing in philosophy, legislation, and morality, the young man may be blind, but hardly so always the aged and experienced—as Plato says, *Νέος μὲν γὰρ ὢν πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀμβλύτατα αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ ὄρα, γέρον δὲ ὀξύτατα* †. It has been proved that the per centage of loss upon vessels commanded by masters who have made one voyage is 16·13; two voyages, 10·70; three voyages, 8·82; four and more voyages, 1·62. So it is with men in regard to the voyage of life; the rocks and currents are less fatal to the practised.

But hitherto we seem to have observed chiefly negative advantages. Let us attend now to the positive affinities which exist between old age and Catholicism. We remarked on the first of these roads how the latter was congenial with boyhood

and youth. We shall now find that its affinity with our nature only grows more close with years. "I think it false," says Pliny, "that, as some say, the roots of trees are diminished by age; for I have seen an old, gnarled oak upturn by the force of a tempest, and its roots covered an acre*." Be that as it may, the mind of the aged, in their normal condition, indicates no decay in the ramifications of those convictions which stretch out in the direction of faith; but it extends them wider and deeper in proportion as its experience becomes greater, and its knowledge more general and profound. Valery says that his own opinion agrees with the experience of Fontanelle, who said that the twenty happiest years of his life had been those from fifty-five to seventy-five†. It is that there is a felicitous way of growing old, when the mind grows with years wiser and more beautiful. Strength and eloquence may decline—but

"There is a nobler glory which survives
Until our being fades, and solacing
All human care, accompanies its change."

Alphonso, king of Arragon, used to affirm that the older men grow the more they increase in wisdom,

"Outliving beauty's outward, with a mind
That doth renew swifter than blood decays!"

Πολλὰ διδάσκει—ὁ πολὺς βίος τοῦ †,

says the Greek poet; and the Roman dramatist affirms that nothing can compensate for the wisdom taught by age:

"Numquam ita quisquam bene subducta ratione ad vitam fuit,
Quin res, ætas, usus semper aliquid apportet novi;
Aliquid moneat, ut illa, quæ te scire credas, nescias;
Et quæ tibi putaris prima, in experiundo repudies §."

The light at least of human wisdom is so slow in coming, that Plato said, "he was to be counted blessed who in old age could attain to true opinions." As a belated flower blooming during the fall of the leaf rejoices a gardener's heart, so shines a wise old age in the wilderness of life. The poet addresses Nestor as if all the prudence of his times were concentrated in him, saying,—

"O facunde senex, ævi prudentia nostri ||."

It is certain that whatever may be their attachment to what is obsolete in matters of secondary importance, the old are often in advance of their age, in regard, as we shall shortly observe, to the

* N. H. xvi. 56.

† Hippol. 251.

‡ Curiosités italiennes.

§ Adelph.

|| Met. xii.

noblest characteristics of wisdom. The best results of attaining to moral and religious truth, when this knowledge is obscured by the mists of passion and the prejudice which arises from a mistaken regard to selfish or even national interests, seem in manhood sometimes to be either forgotten or rejected; and it is not strange that those who are in ignorance should be deprived of them when we find men, and even races, formed by nature as polite as brave, and so circumstanced as to be at the centre from their birth, yet rejecting its sweetest influences, and showing themselves scornful of all who have difficulties of every kind to surmount in advancing towards it, when we see them professing that truth which ought to generate love and kindness for all mankind, and yet apparently for that very reason only the more irascible and inconsiderate, like those the poet speaks of—

“Rude, bitter, coarse, implacable in hate
To Albion, plotting ever her mischance.”

The wisdom of life, as well as that which more relates to doctrinal conformity with Catholicism, returns to the old like a recollection. It returns like a second youth, which hears no tribunes, and sheds a sweetness resembling that of the sleep which just before the aurora surpasses, as the chorus says, all other rest.

“The noisy day is deafen’d by a crowd
Of undistinguish’d birds, a twittering race;
But only lark and nightingale forlorn
Fill up the silences of night and morn *.”

Age, again, has affinity with Catholicism in its tendency to view men on the side of nature rather than on that which is artificial. Like youth, it is a great leveller, but without bitterness, its object being not to lower the great, but to raise up the lowly; not to diminish our respect for the powerful and renowned, but “to extend our sympathy to all, who in humbler conditions have the same or still higher claims on our esteem or affection.” It so loves the common people that it would reject whatever they reject, and be guided by their judgment in a thousand details relative to life and manners. Perhaps it can remember a day, and the feeling has only grown stronger with years, when it used to regard even each new fashion in dress with a kind of repugnance until it saw the same adopted by the lower classes, when it seemed, by the mere fact of their having imitated it, to become for the first time graceful and pretty. It salutes with all due respect every nest of courtiers with its smooth faces, rich clothes, and sublime compliments; but to a few it whispers, “Fortune and courtesy of opinion give many men nobility of birth, that

never durst do nobly, nor attempt any design, but fell below their honour." Search all history, and where do you find one of the common people betraying or deserting any of the illustrious unhappy? From the poor outlaw and his wife, who saved Margaret of Anjou in the forest of Hexham, to the latest times, it is the same result. "The observation is forced upon us," says the biographer of Henrietta Maria, "that never was a Stuart betrayed by one of the lower classes." Go thy ways, age has made many such observations for itself. It contrasts the life of the rich and lower classes in regard to enjoyment too, and with our old dramatist laments how "Virgins of wealthy families waste their youth," saying,—

"After a long sleep, when you wake, your woman
Presents your breakfast, then you sleep again ;
Then rise, and being trimm'd up by others' hands
You are led to dinner; and that ended, either
To cards or to your couch (as if you were
Born without motion); after this to supper,
And then to bed; and so your life runs round
Without variety, or action."

It perceives that a lower rank would yield more wholesome exercise; and then remembering, perhaps, its early ambition, it says with the poet,—

"Cui fuit indocti fugienda hæc semita vulgi
Ipsa petita lacu nunc mihi dulcis aqua est."

It would have thee, like the lower classes, rise with the sun, walk, dance, or hunt, visit the groves and springs, and learn the virtues of plants and simples. When it hears of ten pounds for a pocket handkerchief and a hundred for a shawl, its eyes, as a late witty author says, rest admiringly on "the wearer of a different apparel, the three-and-sixpenny bonnet of simple straw, with the eighteen-penny collar," and to those who esteem only finery, it says with indignation, in the words of our old play,—

"Look manly, take a man's affections to you !
Young women, in the old world, were not wont, sir,
To hang out gaudy bushes for their beauties,
To talk themselves into young men's affections."

Like youth in former times at least, old age has an observant eye to distinguish too where real goodness lies. When it sees this mechanic, labouring boy, or poor dressmaker, timidly, furtively drop their penny into the poor man's hat or in the church's plate, and the rich person passing them with such tremulous haste, either to give nothing or to arrive at a more honourable place to offer there a shilling, it is tempted to think that many respectable persons deceive themselves very much in regard to their

estimation of the common people, and the relative merit of different classes of society. Why, one of the prettiest scenes in the world it thinks is to see all the kind offices that some lodger in a London garret, with heart as light as a feather, will discharge to help her neighbour in the next room. The eye of age follows both classes through their several haunts, and watches them. It sees on one side proof by marking faces, gaits, actions, and words, in the tumultuous streets, that by condemning man to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, God provided for his being good-humoured, amiable, and loved too. It sees proof, on the other hand, that riches spoil humanity; for what else can be the conclusion after observing cased up in chambers those walking dolls, who scarcely air themselves but at a horse-race or i' th' park with puppets; those apes of every foreign fashion, who envy no ready youth in fustian "that is content with a spurr'd horse without caring for a duker that neighs and scrapes;" and will even ask for Heaven's sake whereabouts does the pleasure of walking lie? for they swear they have often sought it and yet could never find it. There is a silly age with some men of transition when such pretensions are swallowed with a relish; but experience has taught the old that it is best for the high to speak no wiser than persons of baser titles, and still better to live and act like them. It has taught them that content, and love, and kindness live under the smoked attic with much more sweetness than where the famed hand of artists to the life have drawn upon the roof the fictions of the gods. Nay, still further, they will say, let those who object to such thoughts follow the advice of old Ben Jonson. "Let them," as he says, "look over all the great and monstrous wickednesses, and they shall never find those in poor families. They are the issue of the wealthy giants and the mighty hunters; whereas most great work worthy of praise or memory came out of poor cradles." At all events, between these sentiments, feelings, and habits of life, and the spirit of Catholicism, there must be a closer affinity than will perhaps at first be generally suspected; for, after all, whatever may be the maxims current in high society, they cannot but agree with a religion which, beginning in its latest form at the crib of Bethlehem, when there was no admittance for its divine founder in the inns, was first announced as constituted in that completeness, not in the brilliant saloons of Herod, or in the dining-rooms of Pharisees, but to the poor shepherds keeping the night-watches over their flocks. Certainly, if on so light a page one may presume to hint at such an analogy, He who chose for himself a poor mother and all the liberty of action which the circumstances of an humble station entail, can never be justly said to have taught us to regard with suspicion that liberty, or to identify virtue with any of the forms of restraint which are consequent upon riches.

Again, there is a moral affinity between Catholicism and old age, arising from the decline of passions in the latter. An old person is not like a young man or woman, who, I think, will be ready to go out of their mind if they arrive too late for a day's pleasure. Central principles may be felt in manhood as in some respect a restraint, while manhood may be sometimes obnoxious to the remorse arising from its real or imaginary contraventions of the divine laws. In old age the sense of control is not so much felt, and the Church may use words like those of the Palmer, in *Sintram*, to Biorn, and say, "Between me and thee, old man, the case stands quite otherwise. We have nothing to reproach each other with."

But it would detain us too long to notice all the affinities between the wisdom of old age and the spirit of the central truth. Let us observe only one more of the points in which this agreement is most remarkable. Take that of the virtue which by Heaven is called charity, and by men tolerance. "It were a wise inquiry," says a late writer, "to compare point by point, especially at remarkable crises in life, our daily history with the rise and progress of ideas in the mind." An ordinary mortal who has been taught central principles from his youth, unless he has been a self-willed dabbler in theology, for whose vagaries there is no accounting, experiences no great alteration of views as he grows old. Having never taken for granted irrational and eccentric conclusions, supposing that he was forbidden to think, and that religion ought to cut the sinews of all earthly progress, to declare war against intellect and imagination, against industrial and social improvement, and that he ought to torment himself in a struggle against innocent and healthy impulses; and who has never found that his belief narrowed his affections or filled him with gloomy views respecting ages and nations not enlightened by the Gospel; who has never mistaken made-up fictions for Divine realities, having never accepted as judges a small party of men forming a creed of their own while assuming the airs of the universal Church; having never received as the authorized teaching of the Church opinions that cannot be reconciled with the wisdom, or goodness, or mercy of God; having never professed the religion of the letter, deeming the quotation of texts decisive of religious questions; having never thought that the Bible was his religion, and supposed himself competent to form from it his views of morals and religion; having not to unlearn that Bibliolatry which he may live to consider the greatest religious evil; having never believed that the solution of difficult literary problems formed any essential part of his religion, or that it required his disentangling for himself by a most delicate and uncertain process the true sense of different disputed texts: such a person, supposing that he has never im-

bibed the sophistic character which implies wrongheadedness, against which nothing is safe, has no successive changes of belief to relate when writing the history of his own creed. Age does show him running to meet the most extravagant opinions, tampering with all sorts of obnoxious subjects, as if captivated with the intellectual phosphoric light they emit; shocking the public by the tenor of his productions, but seeming "more intent upon startling himself with his electrical experiments in theology, which, while scorching other people, appear to him harmless amusements, the corruscations of an aurora borealis, that play round the head but do not reach the heart *." Nevertheless, even under the most favourable circumstances, old age has for all that a wisdom of its own, which affects more or less even its religious views. Experience can throw light on every department of knowledge; and theology itself, perhaps, as well as morals, without being formally amenable to it, can by means of it be brought nearer to its own standard of perfection, which consists in love. In every man the past has left its deposits in successive sepulchres, which the turf of the surface may cause to be forgotten, but when we dive into the heart and scrutinize its ages, we are astonished at what it contains and what it preserves. There are worlds within us; and the cry of each is for charity, teaching us to extend to others and to believe that others will obtain that which we ourselves so greatly need, and perhaps fancy that we deserve. Again, it cannot be doubted but that in many men's theology old age has somewhat to soften down.

The heart of youth is open to the exercise of love and kindness, but its judgment, as we all know, is liable to get wrong. "In the period of youth and of impetuous ascension men," says a great French writer, "are rude and hasty to despise all that they have renounced after having loved it. The stone that served yesterday to rest their head on, is employed by them to-day for a step from which to mount higher, and they tread on it with an insulting heel. In later life this stone, which they have sat on and which they leave behind them, is no longer insulted by them; and if they return to it, if they touch it once more, it is with a friendly hand and with lips to kiss it for the last time." When the disposition to love, therefore, remains, and the judgment becomes thus corrected, the result will present a ground that is most favourable to the fructification of central truths. What heaps of words some men have got together to signify nothing! These are given up by the old, who often literally verify in themselves by charity the words of the Apostle: "*Ex parte cognoscimus, et ex parte prophetamus. Cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex*

parte est." Domenico Giuntalocchi represented in one of his pictures an old man employed like a boy, and he placed this inscription on it—"I am learning still." Years must continue to bring knowledge with them either by actual addition of new intellectual food, or by the transfusion and amelioration of what was crude and indigestible. The old in consequence may have certain retractions to make to satisfy themselves, at least, though they may not, like St. Augustin and others, publish them to the world; for there is arising from an exuberance of zeal that age and the experience of life alone correct—an unfair mode of arguing with opponents, of overstating their opinions, and of drawing contrasts in their prejudice which cannot be borne out by facts; in short, an ungenerous and unjust treatment of one side in a dispute, such perhaps as the stranger himself, unguardedly citing vehement foreign authors, has practised, so far at least as repeating their words, towards those who all through life have been most kind to him, which would weigh upon the conscience if a man were to persist in it without an acknowledgment of the fault. Certainly he, at least for one, has occasion to use the apology of a great writer, who confesses that he has been "led at times unconsciously to overstate his own sentiments, and that an excess of colouring has stolen over his canvas, which ultimately offends no eye perhaps so much as his own." There is, moreover, a kind of vehement, raw, subjective theology, consisting in revolting illustrations, arbitrary inferences, gratuitous additions, and applications to present things which do not seem justified by a learned knowledge of sacred texts, crude expositions, merely froth and barm, the yeast that makes some thin sharp lectures work—belonging to the violent cushion-thumper, your child of fervency, your man of voice, who seems in love with hate, as if the furies dwelt upon his tongue; your man of oh's! who is ever in a rapture; a kind of passionate rhetoric which, however it may have pleased them in the age of recklessness, will not continue to give them satisfaction when they level their larger thoughts unto the basis of such deep shallowness. The most it can obtain from them then will be a kind of disagreeing consent. They will muse beyond it—

"Let a mind," says a deep thinker, "receive always from another mind its truth, though it were in torrents of light, without periods of solitude, inquest, and self-recovery, and a fatal disservice is done." Age is delivered by Catholicism from having its understanding inordinately biassed by the genius of any one individual; but it is also delivered, by its own experience and quick appreciation of central truths, from the undue influence of elements and the interpretations of the foolish, often unconscious of the bearing of their own assertions. Within

certain limits it thinks for itself a little, and that little is often very fatal to vulgar prejudices and to the rash asseverations of the passionate, whether nominally in favour of or in opposition to truth. There are always some persons who really deserve the epithet which the Italians applied to certain fanatics whom they called the *Piagnone*, the mourners or grumblers ; persons who seem to take delight in magnifying the difficulties which impede others, and who with a kind of gaiety of heart expatiate on the subjects which appal men of reflection, seeming to derive from dwelling on such themes a satisfaction that is intense in proportion as it is inhuman. To such declaimers old age is tempted to reply, It is the shadow, sir, of yourself ; trust me, a mere reflection. Cease—

“ For these are but grammatical laments,
Feminine arguments, and they move me,
As some in pulpits move their auditory,
More with their exclamation than sense
Of reason or sound doctrine.”

The old man is often willing to say with an eminent writer, “ Enemies of religion I do not fear ; but I confess I have some considerable dread of the indiscreet friends of religion ; I tremble at that respectable imbecility which shuffles away the plainest truths, and thinks the strongest of all causes wants the weakest of all aids. I shudder at the consequences of fixing the great proofs of religion upon any other basis than that of the widest investigation and most honest statement of facts. I allow such nervous and timid friends to religion to be the best and most pious of men, but I most humbly hope that such friends will evince their zeal for religion by ceasing to defend it, and remember that not every man is qualified to be the advocate of a cause in which the mediocrity of his understanding may possibly compromise the dearest interests of society.” Age delivers men also, as we have seen, from that impatience of contradiction which, while it is opposed to enlarged and truly central views of men and things, constitutes a main source of intolerance and persecution. It teaches them not to grieve too much on account of unfit associates, but to be reconciled to any society, when they see how much thought they owe to the disagreeable antagonism of various persons who pass and cross them. It says with a distinguished author, “ Whenever we feel pain and alarm at our opinions being called in question, it is almost a certain sign that they have been taken up without examination ; or that the reasons which once determined our judgment have vanished away.” Age and experience have a tendency to make a man moderate in his opinions, whilst youth and inexperience are hasty, dogmatic, positive, and self-confident. Age on the

whole, therefore, in consequence of many attributes is favourable to that toleration which Catholicism has been so vehemently accused of disowning, though no doubt the real representatives of Catholicity who wrote as inspired by it, and not as anonymous commercial speculators, have always been its advocates. Religion, oh, how it is commedled with policy! The first bloodshed in the world happened about religion. "A plague o' both your houses!" cries Mercutio dying, "your houses!" and really they who without being made worms' meat, have been cudgelled with almost all religions, might perhaps be pardoned for using in a moment of excitement similar words in reference to those retainers who fight for each with weapons of their own fashioning. Age at least subscribes to the sentence that even error can be more thoroughly scattered when conjoined with kindness, than truth can when conjoined with oppression and persecution. Strange infatuation, to regard the absence of moderation, forbearance, and charity as the index of a great religious character, when even the bishops of the apostolic age were enjoined to seek "the good report of them that are without," that is of the Gentile society, and of the world as distinct from the Church. Old age says with an admirable writer, "Are we to understand that the moment a man is sincere, he is narrow-minded; that persecution is the child of belief, and that a desire to leave all men in the unpunished exercise of their own religious views, can only exist in the mind of an infidel? It thanks God it knows many men whose principles are as firm as they are expanded, who cling tenaciously to their own faith without the slightest disposition to force that upon other people. Toleration, it says, whatever may be advanced by its friends or its enemies, is a great good, and a good to be imitated, let it come from whom it will. If a sceptic is tolerant, it only shows that he is not foolish in practice as well as erroneous in theory. If a religious man is tolerant, it evinces that he is religious from thought, because he exhibits in his conduct one of the most beautiful and important consequences of a religious mind, an inviolable charity. Age may have learned from experience that toleration is not always greatest where it is loudest professed. It is a just remark of Lord Jeffrey, that Southey has ascribed to his heroes opposed to the Moors a spirit of persecution and fanaticism which would be distasteful and revolting in a nation of zealous Catholics.

These affinities in general are not always supposed to belong to old age, for it is a common error to mistake its vices for its natural characteristics, and to suppose that a blind attachment to the past, a strange humour to cross the method of the world, to see the evil side of all things without the good, and an intolerant spirit form its peculiar appanages; but Johnson, who used to say

when himself old how much he loved the young men of the age, was one out of a thousand instances to prove the contrary in regard to the former opinion. "I have met my adversaries on their own ground," said Chateaubriand in his last years, furnishing another instance in himself, "I have not gone to bivouac in the past under the old banner of the dead—banner not inglorious, but which hangs down the staff because no breath of life can stir it." So far from confounding the vices with the characteristics of old age, it should be observed that age has a tendency to make men incline more and more towards a cheerful, indulgent religion, like that which is formed by the combination of central principles that constitute Catholicism, and to discard as one of the unhappy follies of earlier life all morose contracted and uncharitable views of mankind. Age in fact, after all, has the most need of invoking cheerfulness. So long as a man thinks that there are no serious difficulties in life (and often it is only till he is all but a grandfather that he makes their discovery), he feels drawn towards tragic and solemn things. He likes your black-mailed warrior, your dark shadows of darker figures gliding under Gothic arches, and he would like to see Philosophy itself at his elbow, *maugre* his loathed attendants and his detestable complexion. But when he finds, though it were only by the anticipation of a nervous temperament acting upon a frame that begins to lose its force and its elasticity, that there are enough of natural shadows in real life, he does not wish to conjure up fictitious ones. After he has once tasted what is bitter in realities, you must allow him what is sweet in his ideal world. Let him have sunshine on the fields, sunshine in the rooms, and sunny smiles on the faces of all around him. He adopts the motto of the sun-dial near Venice, which Hazlitt so admires, saying, "some monk of the dark ages must have invented and bequeathed it to us"—*Horas non numero nisi serenas*. He says with that amiable author, "What a fine and truly Catholic lesson is conveyed to the mind by those words, unparalleled in softness and harmony,—"to take no note of time but by its benefits, to watch only for the smiles, and neglect the frowns of fate, to compose our lives of bright and gentle moments, turning always to the sunny side of things, and letting the rest slip from our imaginations unheeded or forgotten*." So he turns to a religion that, after attracting his youth by its solemnity, can be interpreted as enticing his old age by its popular endearments; a religion that allows enjoyments to all classes in unproved pleasures free, that opens gardens for the recreation of the people without forbidding the upper ranks to enter with them; that sanctions the mirth of the gay, and allows even those who are in

* Men and Manners.

the decline of years to seek admission into their company. For much is done tacitly where wisdom reigns, and charity makes peace with nature. Men who know how to be old are charmed with a wisdom like that which tells them that religion itself is an instrument, not an end ; that churches, altars, solemn offices, ceremonies, prayer, abstinence, and all exercises of devotion, are only means to attain an end, and that this end is love ; not an abstracted, imaginary, selfish love of the invisible, but a practical and most real love of what meets them at every turn, in the house, in the street, in the men and women around them, whatever may be their station in society, whatever may be their faults, their frailties, their inconsistencies, their miseries. Consequently, such old persons have no predilection for the face that has zeal and fervour in it without for that reason burning before the altar like the primitive lamps. The views which kindle that face may be proposed with learning of a certain kind, and there is nothing more unwise than a certain kind of learning ; they may rest upon logical deductions, and there may be too much logic in life ; for as Johnson, citing one instance, observes, "wretched would be the pair above all names of wretchedness who should be doomed to adjust by reason every morning all the details of a domestic day." They may, in fine, be supported with ability and eloquence, and one-sided views are never left without such aids, but in the home that wise old age would choose to dwell in, one good feeling is worth them all. When Clara, in the *Lover's Progress*, hears that Lydian has become devout, and able by discourse to edify a monastery, she exclaims,

"——— That lessens my belief ;
For though I grant my Lydian is a scholar
As far as fits a gentleman, he hath studied
Humanity, and in that he is a master,
Civility of manners, courtship, arms,
But never aimed at, as I could perceive,
The deep points of divinity."

The friar who reports him answers,

"——— That confirms his
Devotion to be real, no way tainted
With ostentation or hypocrisy,
The cankers of religion."

Such is the view that old age takes of minds and manners. It loves sweetness, gracefulness, and nature in all men. Moreover, it does not reserve all its sympathies and indulgence for some one foreign nation which it has the whim to prefer to every other ; like those fastidious persons in this country, who will mix in the popular amusements of Paris, but keep aloof from

those of London. They know all about the Elysian fields and Boulevards, but as for Beulah Spa or Anerley, the vale of health at Hampstead or Primrose hill by sunset, Rosherville gardens or the iron boats to Chelsea, they disdain to hear of them. But as an English author says of one who found fault with him for going to Sadler's Wells, a place the other never heard of, "To condemn because our multitude admires, is as essentially vulgar as to admire because they admire, though of the two I should prefer the good-natured side." Age, growing Catholic in every sense with years, is not thus biassed. It knows "there's livens" in England as well as "out of it," that as the French have their favourites and their amusements that our population knows nothing of, so we should have ours, as Mr. Hazlitt says, and boast of them too, without their leave. When it sees our own youth enjoying themselves where the foolish rich would scorn to appear, it feels an immense contentment, and says with Julio to the gravest who pass by, "Here are sports that you must look on with a loving eye, and without censure." If these poor mortals seem for a moment too eager or vulgar in their mirth, good society need not be so shocked. Many will say with one who knew both, "If this be too free, what shall we say to the studied insincerity, the callous insensibility of the drawing-room? I prefer a bear garden to the adder's den." Pray then forgive our common people. They that look on see more than those that play; and if this apology prevail not, remember what says rare Ben Jonson,—

"God and the good know to forgive and save;
The ignorant and fools no pity have."

Upon the whole, then, man's declining years have a certain analogy in this respect with that hour which the poet describes so beautifully, saying,—

"And when evening descended from heaven above,
And the earth was all rest, and the air was all love."

The lessons of age are, after all, these great central instructions which Catholicism teaches, arguing a habit of the mind by which just things perfect their working. It says, "what a virtue we should distil from frailty, what a world of pain we should save our brethren, if we would suffer our own weakness to be the measure of theirs." It says, "write me as one that loves his fellow men." It says, "I hope a youth may use his recreation with his master's profit; for—

'That bird which in her nest sleeps out the spring,
May fly in summer; but with sickly wing.'

Why should we cloud by adventitious grief the short gleams of gaiety which life allows us?" It says, "I do not with an economic

strictness observe my servants, and direct each action. Pleasure is free ; and if, like Springlove in the old play, they have their suit to present, 'touching the time of year' when the season seems to call them to the open fields and commons, to the thorn hedges and the wild woods, I do not require them to abjure their practice or to forsake nature." It inspires the same policy with regard to children ; it does not complain like Wasp of his boy, saying, "I dare not let him walk alone, for fear of learning tunes which he will sing at supper. If he meet but a carman in the street, and I find him not talk to keep him off on him, he will whistle him and all his tunes over at night in his sleep! He has a head full of bees!" It says generally, take a lesson from the forest, and educate the feelings of the young by kindness, not by enforcing shame upon delinquents, for soft rain slides to the root and nourishes, where great storms make a noise, wet but the skin in the earth, and run away in a channel. "Bad conduct and even bad temper," it continues, are more frequently the result of unhappy circumstances than of an unhappy organization. Never fear spoiling children by making them too happy. Happiness is the atmosphere in which all good affections grow—the wholesome warmth necessary to make the heart-blood circulate healthily and freely ; unhappiness is the chilling pressure which produces here an inflammation, there an excrescence, and, worst of all, 'the mind's green and yellow sickness—ill-temper *.' Such are the maxims of all those old men of whom we read in histories as having been eminently honoured and loved. Take the example of Luca Signorelli : "During his stay in Arezzo," says Vasari, "his abode was in the Casa Vasari, where I was then a child of eight years ; and I remember that the good old man, who was exceedingly courteous and agreeable, having heard from the master who was teaching me letters that I attended to nothing in school but drawing figures, turned round to my father and said to him, 'Antonio, let little George by all means learn to draw ; for even though he should afterwards apply to learning, still the knowledge of design, if not profitable, cannot fail to be honourable.' Then turning to me he said, 'Study well, little kinsman.' He added many other things respecting me which I refrain from repeating, because I know that I have been far from justifying the opinion which that good old man had of me. Being told that I suffered from bleeding at the nose, he bound a jasper round my neck with his own hand, and with infinite tenderness ; this recollection of Luca will never depart while I live." For those who are no longer children old age of this kind would have the same indulgence. Let free-born youth, it says, when stricter training is proposed, have

* Fam. Herald.

its hours of youth ; when yoked, and those light vanities purged from us, how fair it grows ! how gentle and how tender

“ It twines about these lives that shoot up with it !
 A sullen person fear, that talks not to you ;
 It has a sad and darken'd soul, loves dully :
 A merry and a free one, give her liberty,
 Believe her, in the lightest form she appears to you,
 Believe her excellent.—
 Let but these fits and flashes pass, she'll show to you
 As jewels rubb'd from dust, or gold new burnish'd ! ”

Life without a companion is a sea of danger, young man, to your bark ; and

“ ———— ’Tis not the name neither
 Of wife can steer you, but the noble nature,
 The diligence, the smile, the love, the patience ;
 She makes the pilot, and preserves the husband. ”

These are the lessons of that old age which feels the attraction of all central truth. In general, on all the world, it does not invoke curses, but blessings ; it does not, like some pious persons, exult in the thought that those whom they dislike in this world are sure to be everlastingly tormented in the next : it does not wish to believe that others are enemies of God, nor does it every moment express its conviction that He will show his power “ contra folium quod vento rapitur. ” To qualify men for presenting themselves as those pseudo-privy councillors of God who know the exact judgment that awaits each sinner, old age left to its centripetal influence is clearly inefficient. As a late poet says,—

“ There wants a certain cast about the eye ;
 A certain lifting of the nose's tip,
 A certain curling of the nether lip,
 In scorn of all that is beneath the sky. ”

Its language is that of the same poet when saying of himself,—

“ Well ! be the graceless lineaments confest !
 I do enjoy this bounteous, beauteous earth ;
 And dote upon a jest
 Within the limits of becoming mirth :
 I own I laugh at over-righteous men,
 I own I shake my sides at ranters.
 I've no ambition to enact the spy
 On fellow souls, a Spiritual Pry.
 On Bible stilt I don't affect to stalk ;
 Nor lard with Scripture my familiar talk ;
 For man may pious texts repeat,
 And yet religion have no inward seat *.”

Age probably has the memory of fond affection in early years ; memory, too, so strong that it seems as if the past were present—not only recalling the time, the place, the person, but all the surrounding objects, the temperature of the air, its fragrance, its colour, a certain local impression, which can still fill it with delight. Sweet is the dew of this memory, and pleasant the balm of this recollection. It knows what it is under some verdant shade to lie and laugh as in Elysium, or in a boat to gaze upon one whose sweet and winning soul imparts by voice and looks softness and beauty to all nature. What a little matter, then, lingers in this memory, and seems to defy time, verifying the lines—

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever :
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us !”

An arch taunt levelled from that boat at a swimming youth with swans about him, or his retort, equally childish and good-humoured ; a strawberry reached from a certain hand to the lips of the rower, while tugging against the stream between some sultry banks that make it seem flowers, like those of our dear familiar Thames from Kew to Twickenham—these are the things that are never forgotten. The recollection of these affections, of these imaginings light as air, leaves no stings within the conscience of age, but only a tone of infinite tenderness, and sometimes of melancholy ; it nourishes in it a disposition to love, and to let others love, and to be merciful ; to pardon the follies of its species, and what is human, while canonized saints advise it to be indulgent to its own. It nourishes therefore a close affinity with a religion that thoroughly humanizes thought, that enables men to convert life into truth, and to impart the facts of its experience into its doctrine, rendering it wholesome, kind, forgiving. Love has done that, and then nothing but what is central suits its notions of wisdom. It has affinity with a religion that magnifies love, friendship, kindness, that prepares a home where every tongue speaks in fondness, whose inmates live in the happy exchange of innocent pleasures ; who, instead of envying and seeking to vie with others, are made cheerful by seeing their cheerfulness, and satisfied with what they themselves possess ; who, unlike those that find nothing to please or elevate them, and whose constant study is to show perpetual ways of finding fault, cull joys innumerable from daily wants and daily cares, happy in making happy, and blessing in being themselves blest. Such old age hears the central voice as being that, not of a tyrant or a step-dame, but of a fond natural mother ; it

hears its lessons of charity as if they could be expressed in the lines of a modern poet, beginning—

“I’d make the world a palace home,
And ope its happy gates ;
And mankind all in peace should roam,
And they should have no hates !
Young love should bear the softest hues,
And all should bloom within ;
The mind should drink immortal dews,
And bliss her reign begin !

“The world should lose its caste of pride,
And men be filled with mirth ;
And Faith should be the virgin bride,
To tread the flow’ry earth !
Sweet Joy should be the crown’d queen,
Her rule should be divine ;
And, like young stars, men should be seen,
Alike to live and shine !

“I’d bear a crown of fadeless flowers,
In mystic gardens grown ;
I’d weave a charm to bind the hours,
And Love should be my throne !
I’d banish hatred from the breast,
And elevate the mind ;
I’d give young souls eternal rest,
And teach them to be kind * !”

In fine, such old age verifies the truth of the observation that those who become acquainted with the noble pleasure of administering kindness to others find a tie which binds them to life, even if there was scarcely any other attraction to render life desirable. Now where there is a happy consciousness of using life, thus there must be affinity with a religion which identifies itself with internal joy and contentment ; and we have repeatedly observed that central principles render life happy by inspiring these feelings ; therefore between old age and those principles a close relationship exists, even in regard to this last attribute ; which observation can in consequence, like the preceding results, direct those who are on this road to find their own centre in that faith which alone combines all those principles in one.

The last affinity which we may distinguish as existing between old age and Catholicism consists in the effective desire which they both generate, notwithstanding the results just noticed, of a future and happier existence. It is difficult to say whether there is more pleasure or pain in memory. Both are in it so abundantly that the poor heart overflows with them. Age has not the quality of the river Lethe, to make men forget their

relations, their friends, those who were linked with them in intimate affection, those who loved them as woman only loves, and those whom they loved. One cannot wonder to hear it say of its own past youth and manhood—

“My mates were blithe and kind !
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
To cast a look behind *.”

“Since I lost my brother, the bishop of Aosta,” says the Count de Maistre, “I am but half alive. By degrees I am departing.” What will they say who have to look back to find some still fonder being ? Words are incompetent to express the thoughts and memories which move them sometimes most profoundly, though only to be recalled by relating something as insignificant as Rosseau’s sleeping near Lyons in a niche of the wall after a fine summer’s day, with a nightingale perched above his head. What is intimate in the thoughts and memories themselves, that which chases every other image from before it by its incomparable beauty, flashes across the mind like lightning, and is gone before they can attempt to trace in what it consists. They only can distinguish something that seems too trifling, not to say ridiculous, to mention—some walk perhaps years ago with a beloved friend at sunset ; some remark then made at the beauty of a bird or flower ; some moments then spent in watching a swan, or perhaps gathering blackberries merrily in a wood, hearing together some sweet music in a garden on a summer’s day. These by means of associations are visions of bliss, but of departed bliss, and such as they believe can never return for them in this world. Thus a tone of sadness steals over the mind that recollects what no longer exists here below ; and this prepares it for contemplating without bitterness the passing away to a different sphere where new hopes present themselves, resting on ground that satisfied the reason of a Leibnitz and a Bossuet. Even if all could be brought back for a time, still they know there would be a time to take leave again of all. When Protesilaus asks permission to return to life for one day to see again his bride, Plutus replies to him, *Εἴτα τί σε ὀνήσει μίαν ἡμέραν ἀναβιῶναι, μετ’ ὀλίγον τὰ αὐτὰ ὀδυροῦμενον* ; The aged are drawn therefore towards what will not pass away, and towards a religion of hopes. When invited by it to advance they would fain, as poets say,—

“Reply in hope—for they are worn away,
And death and love are yet contending for their prey.”

There is in fact nothing stronger or more congenial to human hearts, let them be of what kind they may, than the wish

to have these highest hopes confirmed, and to hear such words as

“ ————— fruentur
Æthereæ sedes, cœlumque erit exitus illi.”

Besides, a sense of the brevity of all that is left of the road before them, must be favourable to those fruitful thoughts on which Catholicism so often and so securely reckons for the recovery of its children. That moral courage which is so needful sometimes for the accomplishment of its law is a natural attendant upon years. Castricius, resisting the consul Cn. Carbo to his face, when the latter urged his own power, saying that he had many swords, the other calmly replied,—*et ego annos* *. The Roman author calls Cæsellius *periculose contumax* ; for when his friends reminded him of his danger from the triumvirs, he replied, Two things which seem most bitter to men give me great liberty, namely, *senectutem et orbitatem*. “This life grows shorter with its increase,” says St. Isidore, “and it is truly short.” With the aged all continuance here of course is doubly uncertain ; as Sophocles says,—

σμικρά παλαιὰ σώματ' ἐννάζει ῥοπή†.

“Old men of your age,” says Antonio de Guevara, writing to Dom Loys Bravo in his usual playful style, “ought to have a warm room and a warm house ; for as there is always some screw loose in an old man, a little cold or wind entering by a chink will do more harm than passing the whole night under the canopy of heaven in youth.” Moreover, the aged must generally be aware that the departure of the old is often without previous warning, and of this circumstance they have a symbol in the forest ; for the foliage of the wych-elm falls suddenly. Its leaves curl up, become brown, and flutter from their spray. It seems as if it heard the stealing by of frost before any intimation of its approach is given. Such is the case frequently with old men, and they are conscious that it is. “As for me,” says Chateaubriand, “I have hitherto always enjoyed robust health, but it is precisely constitutions of this sort which are the most liable to a sudden ruin. They resemble the ground on the river’s bank, undermined by the fugitive wave ; covered with herbs and flowers, nothing distinguishes it from other ground, when all of a sudden a sound is heard, it crumbles and falls.” A sense of this uncertainty, without interfering with the calm enjoyment of life’s remaining pleasures, will therefore generally familiarize the mind with those grave and effective thoughts which move men to look about for that stability in matters of religion, and for that ground of solid reasonable hope for the futurity which approaches, that the central principles of the Catholic religion yield.

* Val. Max. vi.

† Œd. Tyr.

In fine, there is, in spite of all the calm delights of its declining day, a certain weariness of the present life, more or less at times incident to old age, that can easily lead men to prepare anxiously and cheerfully for entering upon another existence, by taking those precautions which calm and deliberate reason, ever conscious of its own limits, suggests and requires. The ancient poet anticipates a period when he will be resigned and willing to die.

“Elysios olim liceat cognoscere campos,
Lethæamque ratem, Cimmeriosque lacus,
Quum mea rugosâ pallebunt ora senectâ,
Et referam pueris tempora prisca senex *.”

There are some thoughts incident to the experience of old age that stick upon its memory, and that it would fain discharge by dying. There is, moreover, continually a fresh recurrence of what in all ages had reconciled the old to the thought of death. On the shore opposite to Troy, near the Hellespont, at the sepulchre of Protesilaus, are elm trees said to have been planted by nymphs around his grave, which, according to Pliny, every hundred years, when they grow sufficiently high to behold Troy, wither away to death, and then again send forth fresh shoots to keep up the succession †. There are periods occurring thus in the life of man, when, on attaining to a certain elevation, and arriving within view of certain realities, he contracts secretly a distaste, or at least an inaptitude, for the present scene on which he has so long walked hand in hand with time, and withers away visibly, for all the desires of this world. When he has lived long enough to see certain vicissitudes which are of common, not to say constant, recurrence ; then, like Æson,

“Jam propior leto, fessusque senilibus annis,”

he desires to behold no more until a different order of phenomena shall dawn for him.

“How long my life will last (he says) I know not ;
This know, how soon soever I depart,
My wishes will before me have arrived.”

Misery in an aged person's years gives every thing a tongue to question it. We need not cite for the reply commonplace instances produced by the ordinary calamities of the world ; but there is a subtle and most efficacious source of detachment from life, which has played too great part in history to be passed over in silence. There is a life beautiful and free, that was known in Paradise, and yet that so readily enters into

combination with the peculiar forms and colour of every successive generation, that in each age it appears to have only risen up with it for the first time, and to be the product of its particular stage of civilization ; a life which, with all its charms, is nothing more or less than the simple and logical result of the very constitution of our nature, not more subject to the influence of the fall than any other, or, in fact, than reason itself, and for the continuance of which, notwithstanding the complaints of some, speaking often, without any authority, in the name of heaven, the Creator, by his universal laws, seems to have effectually made provision ; there is, I say, a life, graceful and loving, in harmony with the fairest, and not the less the most rational ideal that we can form of such an existence as ours, and of such creatures as ourselves ; a life, notwithstanding its equal adaptation to all classes,—for it requires no balance at a banker's,—poetical, musical, and picturesque, represented in its defects and surface by those merry writers and humorous artists who paint the passing topics of the day, and the result of whose works is after all, perhaps, to teach the best wisdom, by conveying a smiling and charitable view of humanity in its minutest details ; a life by no means at variance, as some would pretend, with a sense of man's noblest prerogative, the spirituality which distinguishes him from other animals, or inconsistent with any principle essential to the central wisdom, while it seems to present itself recommended by the strongest arguments from analogy, since we see that God, by his natural light, the sun, adds beauty and rich and varied colouring to the world, subject to our senses, from which fact one may fairly conclude that it must be a gratuitous piece of severity to suppose that his supernatural light is to add gloom and pale insipidity to the social and moral world, subjected to the eye of imagination and intelligence. At all events, to whatever extent, or in whatever manner it may be susceptible of explanation, definition, or indulgence, when, from a habit of rejecting every thing that does not assume a kind of formal, theological dress, answering to what is alone admitted by the præ-Raphaelite school of painters, this life is inexorably cried down, and from inability to reduce it to scientific formulas, intended for another purpose, a melancholy, stiff, disproportioned, and unnatural kind of existence, in accordance with certain conventional and inapplicable phrases, is substituted for it, the condition and mind of many persons are embittered, and the atmosphere that surrounds the old is rendered too cold and unwholesome to be long endurable. Since the epoch of the false reform, with its action and its reaction, history and biography unfold a melancholy page to convince us that what is intended for the consolation becomes, by an abuse, not unfrequently conducive to the wretchedness of man ; for when it has come to such

a pass that men cannot alone generally repeat Gloucester's words to Henry VI., and say,—

“ Ah, gracious lord, these days are dangerous !
Virtue is chok'd with foul ambition,
And charity chas'd hence by rancour's hand ;”

but, to cite the words of a modern writer, when religion itself, by a too cruel spite, will seem as if made to turn against them, when they see it interpreted, as it has often been for the last three hundred years, so that the whole order of nature appears reversed for them, in obedience to its supposed prescription ; when they see the poetry, or what may be termed, without implying any fault, the romance of their life, needlessly, systematically brought to an end ; when they see what Johnson hints at with such feeling, and many authentic biographies, including those of royal personages, describe in great detail, namely, virtues tending to extremes, and thereby causing variance, piety itself assuming an ungentle part, to make manners quite unnatural and repulsive, men or women that were trained up in a religious school, where divine maxims, scorning comparison with moral precepts, combine so poorly with unkindness and perverse replies, so taught afresh that they must cease to look manly or womanly ; when they see them, as our modern literature sometimes represents them, giving up, in consequence of a most abundant soberness, with daily hue and cries upon those who cannot go the whole length of this way with them, man's affections or woman's affections to become, as our Elizabethan authors would say, starcht pieces of austerity, having such a spiced consideration, such qualms upon the conscience, such chillblains in the blood, that all things pinch them which nature and common sense make custom, becoming, like a sullen set of sentences, severe, suspicious, imbued with a fanaticism, which may be truly qualified as benumbing and yet fantastical, since it has left not in them, as the old fabulist observes, “ a spark of man or woman ;” so that these good persons, unearthly in one sense as the deep sunless source, succumbing to this influence, becoming sacred, sacerdotal, or vestal-hearted, however habited, shadowy, cold, abandoners of recreation, strict, contemplative, sad, solitary, white, as chaste and pure as wind-fanned snow, who to no one near them will allow so much blood as is required to raise a blush, “ can wound mortally without drawing from the veins a single drop, or receiving on their own crystal conscience the faintest stain of crime ;” for this kind of religion, as witnessed in history, and as many persons following every banner know, prompts and requires such behaviour as would make Wisdom herself run frantic through the streets, and Patience quarrel with her shadow ; when they see, as the same observers and

painters of the world remark, men in conformity to such lessons becoming like old wives through blind prophesying, and what is as lamentable, women whose mission is to inspire and beautify existence, to reclaim from vice by gaiety, as Goldsmith says, doing just the contrary of all this, laying aside womanhood, like her that would go to Jerusalem with an escort of angels, and condemning all the recreations and amenities of the common world, as if none should enjoy this life but the worst ; when life's mixed drama begins to assume this perverse and surprising form, they take the hint as significative of a state of things that is without remedy, as far as they are concerned. An earnest desire to please, a sweet community of enjoyment, brave and romantic love, that would have defied time and fortune, all the manly and womanly graces that they used to hear praised and magnified, pass for nothing, or for worse than nothing, in the balance of those melancholy pedants who sanction and suggest the unyielding oppositions, as Johnson style them, of disagreeable virtues ; and then " baffled sympathy, the secret spring of most sadness, is what remains of the taste of life." They are thenceforth disenchanted, and ready to recognize the wisdom of Catholicity in providing consolations of a supernatural order, and ready also, when the appointed hour comes, cheerfully to take their leave to travel to their dust. Even without experience of this kind, which can belong but to very few, the natural course of events around the old prepares them sometimes for welcoming all things that relate to the passage. Admirable are the secrets of Providence for equalizing the happiness of all classes, and enabling men that seem prosperous to meet death with pleasure. Never do these subtle artifices appear more exquisite than in regard to the latter object. That Providence does not want great catastrophes or maladies for effecting this purpose, a look or a tone of voice, implying the absence of love and all kind feeling, suffices. We know from history, that without employing physical causes, nature, by the most simple and trifling means, has the art of creating in men a willingness to think about another life. It is quite wonderful, for instance, how completely, in many historical instances that we read of, she separated and isolated persons who felt most need of it from all human sympathy, letting them see proof that it might have been had close at hand, but all the while resolutely withholding it. Persons, again, according to the difference of their tastes, habits, and constitutions, are attached with more or less affection to certain localities, whether in towns or country, to scenery of some particular kind, or to some one city or neighbourhood, associated in their memory with what is especially dear, and fraught with cheerful images. Well, it happens often in the decline of life that they are so circumstanced as to be cut off for

ever from the hope of being, as far as relates to these conditions of earthly happiness, in their place. Their lot resembles that of Ovid, and, in what is to them like the desolation of Scythia, must they continue until they die. Envyng their own letters, they can address them in the words which he used to his book, and say,

“ ——— ibis in urbem,
Hei mihi ! quo domino non licet ire tuo.
Me mare, me venti, me fera jactat hiems.”

It is then that they learn to sing, with a sense of its sweetness, the *Vitam venturi sæculi* of the Credo ; for it is precisely because these sources of distress seem trivial, that they admit of no other consolation. Again, the human offspring does not always, like the vegetable, show the same qualities as the parent stock. Have you not seen a great oak cleft asunder with a small wedge cut from the very heart of the same tree ? It is an emblem of the aged sire exposed to some proficient in all the illiberal sciences. There are men in every age of the world who see verified the proverb of the Greeks—*Ἀνθρώπων ἡρώων τέκνα πῆματα*, and who have to console themselves by the pleasant conceit of him who said that this happens by a wise provision of nature, —*Ne malum hoc sapientiæ inter mortales latius serpat*. If they have not to mourn for the death of a promising son like him, giving tears, as he says, *ὡς ἐμὴ ὀκυρότης*, they may have, perhaps, to mark the contrast between those who were once “their children” and those who are now men ; and that may possibly be something beyond melancholy, the killing grief which dares not speak ; or which, if it does gain utterance, replies with *Flamineo*, when asked what he thought on,—

“ Nothing, of nothing : leave thy idle questions.
I am i’ th’ way to study a long silence ;
To prate were idle ; I remember nothing ;
There’s nothing of so infinite vexation
As man’s own thoughts.”

True, the thoughts of the old are sometimes unjust, and most perverse. An aged parent will wish his son to be like himself, to have the same tastes, the same occupations, when perhaps Divine Providence, and not Folly, as Erasmus playfully says, mercifully provides that the youth should be unlike him in every respect ; for why should the character of the sire be revived thus, when often, without what seems estimable in him, whether it be diplomatic capacity, military talents, learning, or any peculiar tastes or acquirements, the son may be a thousand times a better and happier man, precisely for the very reason that he adopts, by a necessity of his nature, a wholly different type from the paternal one. God ordains that the soil shall not pro-

duce continuously the same trees and fruits, and why should a family be exempt from a similar law, seeing the infinite variety of excellence which exists in the moral world? But, on the other hand, it is clear from history and continued experience, that frequently old age may feel itself detached from this life by observing the character of those who are to be its heirs. "If one could ever die of shame and grief," says Michael Agnolo, "in his old age, I should not be living now." His were only the vexations of genius. But in every generation there are parents who must even woo those who deserve worst of them; and after all their labours, who can say, like Hieronimo, in the Spanish tragedy,—

"What is there yet in a son,
To make a father doat?
The more he grows in stature and in years,
The more unsquar'd, unlevell'd he appears;
Reckons his parents among the rank of fools,
Strikes cares upon their heads with his mad riots,
Makes them look old before they meet with age."

Methinks a marble lies quieter upon an old man's head than such knowledge obtained by personal sufferings; yet are they not uncommon. Is there a reluctance to die, then, think you, or a backwardness to make provision for dying? The words murmured in such cases are like those of Aëcius—

"Oh, death, thou'rt more than beauty, and thy pleasure
Beyond posterity!"

Even where a happier experience belongs to old age, still it may very possibly have to observe a painful alteration in things about it. The father may look back to hours when his son was his own companion, before the lad was in reach of these insatiate humours. He will look back, above all, to days of flaxen curls and of arch smiles, and ask the still beloved but altered one, What wert thou then?—A child of innocence, a bright emanation of love and beauty, an airy creature of grace and gentleness, never saying an unkind word, or doing an unkind thing, but scattering happiness and joy with looks. Yes, truly, he will continue,

"———'twas a dream divine;
Even to remember how it fled, how swift,
How utterly, might make the heart repine,—
Tho' 'twas a dream."

But it is the course of nature for nothing to endure. We all change; every thing changes; and then if some changes still bring beauty and happiness along with them, there are other

changes of a different kind, which seem to dictate words like those of the poet singing "The Days gone by,"—

"The days gone by,—'tis sad, yet sweet,
To list the strain of parted hours ;
To think of those we loved to meet,
When children, 'mid a thousand flowers ;
The scenes we roved, romantic, lone,
Ere yet our hearts had learned to sigh—
The dreams of rapture once our own,
In days gone by—in days gone by."

To see in such cases how altered in more than years are those who never again may play as boys and little maidens in the woods, pursuing those sweet fancies which once made the flowers fairer, and the fount more clear, is found to be a great specific against such an inordinate attachment to the present life as would reject all central attractions as interfering with the full sense of its felicity.

"The unfeeling may think I on trifles do dwell,
Because of the innocent hours I tell ;
But many there are who will echo my strain,
And wish with their bard they were children again,
Sigh their parents to see, and their dear little friends,
And weep when they think how soon happiness ends.
But One who beholdeth our tears as they fall,
Hath promised, one bright day, to wipe away all *."

But there is other experience still more general, which must force a wider passage for those whose old age is not made exceptional by a sacred mission, imparting resources beyond what this life yields. "He who feels no desires of pleasures," say the vainly wise Brahmins, "he who is free from love, fear, and wrath, possesses a firm mind, and is called Mouni. When one renounces all the desires which enter into the heart, and when one is content in one's self with one's self, then one is confirmed in wisdom. After repressing the senses, man should remain seated, having for the end of all his meditations nothing but the me alone." It is to be hoped that here is enough to satisfy our extreme spiritualists, who perhaps would fain be in love ; but having no other object, are enforced to love their own humour ; but there is no taste in this philosophy ; it is like a potion that a man is told to drink, but turns his stomach with the sight of it ; for the truth is, so little wise is egotism, however spiritual, that there is no true life on earth, as our old poet says, but being in love. There are no studies, no delights, no business, no intercourse, or trade of sense or soul, but what is love.

Old age in common secular life, though solitary, and liable perhaps sometimes to selfish concentration of thoughts, will hardly feel itself so drawn to the wisdom which professes to ignore this truth, as to become unwilling to lose its strains, and exchange them for what is found in Catholic churches—sacred offices, vigils, festivals, conferences for visiting the poor, and those innumerable other provisions which she offers with a view to preparation for a happier existence. Life can hardly become dearer to the possessor of such theology as is contained in the *Mahâbhârata*, or sacred books of Brahmins, in which it is taught that perfection in wisdom consists in the absence of love. An old man no doubt is changed from what he once was; but can the very life be gone out of his heart? Can he desire to be the unprofitable sign of nothing, the veriest drone, and sleep away the remainder of his days, “causing thought to cancel pleasure, making a dark forehead, bent upon truth, the rock on which all affection is to split, wasting life in one long sigh, and never beholding a gentle face turned gently upon his?” No, no! when it comes to this pass, though you promise days happy as the gold coin can invent without such aid, he can never be again in love with a wish; when all trace of the summer of his years is gone, and earth for him has buried every flower, he is ready to shake hands with Time, and consult about what is beyond it. It must be a new world that can attract him, and something different from all that is left to him in the old one, though it were philosophy itself in person, with its abominable beard. In such considerations, one excepts, of course, those who, by a celestial vocation, have been all through life directed, animated, and consoled otherwise than ordinary mortals; and that there are such men every where is, as we found upon another road, an acknowledged fact, and an experimental certainty. One excepts, also, those, forming, perhaps, no inconsiderable class of mankind, to whom there is allusion in a quarter too high to be named here, as being, by natural inclination and habits, invulnerable to the spell of which one speaks, and averse to the whole character which it forms: one speaks only of ordinary mortals, the “laity of noble love,” as our ancient poets call them. These, too, indeed, happily have also a supernatural object proposed to them, and may have supernatural consolations to sustain them; but by the very fact of its origin, the supernatural cannot bind them to this earth, or counteract the natural tendency of years. The chill air of isolation, therefore, with the common mortal must do its work. Is there no one left here below to love him as he used to be loved once, when he could outwake the nightingale, outwatch an usurer, and outwalk him, too, stalk like a ghost that haunted about a treasure, and all that fancied treasure it was love? Then most undoubtedly this change in his relation to

others, were not his thoughts called elsewhere, would smite his lonesome heart more than all misery ; and then it would not be the hearing such sentences of Brahmins, or as Plato proposes with more reason, some rhapsody recited from the Iliad or the Odyssey, that could rivet his wishes to the limits of this world*, or cause him to turn with aversion from every consideration that relates to another. He will say with Calis, in our old play,

“ ——— Alas ! I must love nothing ;
 Nothing that loves again must I be bless'd with !
 The gentle vine climbs up the oak, and clips him,
 And when the stroke comes, yet they fall together.
 Death, Death must I enjoy, and love him !”

His song will be,—

“ Spring it is cheery,
 Winter is dreary,
 Green leaves hang, but the brown must fly ;
 When he's forsaken,
 Wither'd and shaken,
 What can an old man do but die ?
 June it was jolly,
 O for its folly !
 A dancing step and a laughing eye ;
 Youth may be silly,—
 Wisdom is chilly,—
 What can an old man do but die ?”

“ We are all,” says Frederic, in ‘The Chances,’ “ like sea cards ; all our endeavours and our motions (as they do to the north still point at beauty.” But it has been said, that the root of all that inspires us with a sense of beauty and of happiness on earth lies in our desire of love ; that the mind makes a secret reference to it even in contemplating a beautiful edifice, or landscape, or sky, and that it is only when they affect us as love does, that we consider them beautiful. Therefore if love be altogether past away, there is nothing left on earth to point or direct our movements. When years heap their withered hours like leaves on our decay ; when no association of ideas can exist between the present world and that which the heart yearns for,—that which was pronounced by the Creator as necessary for the work of his hands in Paradise ; when man, in short, is left alone, without sympathy, without love, without a visible companion that cares for him otherwise than for the soul of a stranger, he becomes sensible that his happiness cannot be interested in his dismissing all thoughts about first principles, and protracting his

stay still longer upon an earth that for him is grown so cold. You know what the poet says, without ever having been blamed, that I am aware of, for saying it,—

“Soon may I follow
 When friendships decay,
 And from Love's shining circle
 The gems drop away !
 When true hearts lie wither'd
 And fond ones are flown,
 Oh ! who would inhabit
 This bleak world alone ?”

Ay, truly, who would ? Well, then, grim censor, for instinctively one fears your presence, pardon the steps which lead to a result that even you will approve of ; for then there is no longer an obstacle to the thought of eternity, by means of which central principles obtain their victory. Then, if not before, man learns in a kind of practical familiar manner, that the great invisible God, who in Catholicism is all in all, its beginning and its end, is, notwithstanding the impenetrable mystery that envelopes his omnipresence, the friend of friends, the companion of companions, the only one that endures, the only one even, perhaps, that lasts out his life, the only one who knows all his secrets, whom he has always known, and who has always known him. No other heart remembers the adventures, joys, and sorrows, of his youth and manhood ; no one else is left to approve of what might pass for blameless in them, or to pardon what assuredly merited reprobation. The days of love may be passed away ; but He who witnessed and ordained them is not passed away. One is remaining who knew the young man and his innocent companion—one eternal friend who knew both, who was with them when the lover sat by the side of the guide and charmer of his youth ; who was with them when they boated, when they sauntered, when they reposed on the bank where wild-flowers grew : who noted all the raptures of their heart which his creative hand imparted to them, counted all the tears, marked all the silent anguish of their chequered state, as men and women exiled from Paradise ; and so now, in that divine retentive bosom the desolate hopes in reality, and not in a dream, to recover all that was inestimable without its alloy, the rose without the thorn, the friend of sweetest intimacy without the separation, the playmate without weariness, the companion without leave-taking, the loved one without death. For think not that the souls, too, when they depart hence are old and loveless. “No, sure ; 'tis ever youth there ; Time and Death follow our flesh no more ; and that forced opinion that spirits have no affections I believe not. There must be love ; hereafter there

is love." "Old age," says a French writer, "is a traveller by night; the earth is hidden; it sees only the sky, shining with stars over its head." "Which is the happiest season of life?" was the question asked at a festal party, when the host, upon whom was the burden of fourscore years, replied, "You know our forest. When the spring comes, and in the soft air the buds are breaking on the trees, and they are covered with blossoms, I think, How beautiful is spring! And when the summer comes, and covers the trees with its heavy foliage, and singing birds are among the branches, I think, How beautiful is summer! When the autumn loads them with golden fruit, and their leaves bear the gorgeous tint of frost, I think, How beautiful is autumn! And it is sere winter, and there is neither foliage nor fruit, then I look up, through the leafless branches, as I never could until now, and see the stars shine!" Such old age can see also the stars of the spiritual firmament shining for its direction; it can more easily see the beacon of faith, the column of fire, whose light's reflexion shall create a day in the Cimmerian valleys. It can recognize, in other words, the Catholic church, which opens a blissful passage to that realm where night doth never spread

"Her ebon wings; but daylight's always there;
And one blest season crowns th' eternal year."

So then at length, if not before, as undeceived it goes its way.

But, lo! this night of old age, that proves to be so useful and so beautiful, is spent. The dawn of the natural morning is symbolical of what awaits those who have journeyed through that night, though when it is said, in reference to death,

"——— Look, the gentle day
Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of gray,"

we should reply, in consideration of the far more glorious phenomena that we hope to witness on the road that next awaits us,

"——— Blush, gray-ey'd morn, and spread
Thy purple shame upon the mountain-tops!
Or pale thyself with envy, since here comes
A brighter herald than the dull-ey'd star
That lights thee up."

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROAD OF THE TOMES.



It is the remark of an ancient Italian writer, that when Piero di Cosimo represented at Florence, in a kind of dramatic show, the Triumph of Death, which was altogether strange and terrible, the colossal figure of Death bearing the scythe, standing on a funeral black car, which moved on between covered tombs that opened as he passed, and displayed skeletons raising themselves at the sound of a plaintive music summoning them, while troops of dead on horseback followed, chanting the Miserere, the spectacle, though so lugubrious, gave no small pleasure to the people, and proved, contrary to what one might have supposed, an acceptable provision for the amusements of the Carnival; for besides that it was within the reach of every man's comprehension, it is certain, he adds, "that the people, as in their food they sometimes prefer sharp and bitter savours, so in their pastimes are they attracted by things mournful, which, when presented with art and judgment, do most wonderfully delight the human heart." All nature seems to participate in this feeling.

"What bird so sings, yet so does wail?

'Tis Philomel, the nightingale;

Jugg, jugg, jugg, terue, she cries,

And, hating earth, to heaven she flies."

As far as mankind are concerned, the remark of Vasari—for it is he who makes it—can be daily verified if we mix with the lower classes of the community, the sum of all whose poor faults with which so often they are charged is found to be a merry heart, showing how we should be right in generalizing from what Montague says in the *Honest Man's Fortune*:

"—— When I had store of money,
I simper'd sometime, and spoke wondrous wise,
But never laugh'd outright; now I am empty
My heart sounds like a bell, and strikes at both sides."

Though we seem led into a digression thus on setting out, it is well to lose no occasion of representing the kindness of heart in union with lightness of spirits and great simplicity of character which belongs to the common people, and of blending the expression of warm, and generous, and exalted affections with scenes and persons that are in themselves but lowly.

Nevertheless, the name of this, the last road leading out of the forest, seems chosen with a view to avoid, as far as possible, leaving any impressions on the mind that are formidable or repulsive to that nature which is so powerful with us all ; for there is nothing to raise a cloud in the smiling countenance of any one when he hears of the place of sleep, the cemetery, or of those who pass to it—*transeuntium*—as when the bodies of the kings of Spain were borne from Madrid to the Escorial in hearses on which was written “*Transeuntibus* ;” an expression adopted even by historians, as when William of Newbury proceeds to write *De transitu Regis Scottorum* *, meaning his journey to a better life. Poets say,

“ To one who has been long in city pent,
’Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven.”

We in London at least think so, as our suburbs every evening in summer can bear witness. It is even sweet to take this pensive road of the toms, and to see no other verdure than that to which it leads ; while amidst tall shrubs one searches about through wavy grass, and reads some gentle tale of love and sorrow. Though the first thought may have been only to saunter through the lane, up hill, and across the green, toying by each bank and trifling at each stile till we can frolic it within the woods, following the nimble-footed youth, who, as on the day of the Holy Rood in former times, are all wont upon some holiday to take their way a-nutting ; it is often a second thought to visit the encompassed close adjoining, “ seen but by few, and perhaps blushing to be seen ;” for there is nothing to mar that sweet gaiety which seems unacquainted with grief in passing near the graceful sculptured buildings which line the sunny walks, adorned with laurels, eglantine, and cypress spires. Sunshine makes us all courageous, and here is added even the charm of the arts. An oracle of Apollo spoke of those heroes on the banks of the Asopus, whose toms are lighted by the setting sun ; and without attending to any such fabled admonition, it is certainly a beautiful thing in autumn to see the roseate light of evening warming the marble with a glance of gold, while the yellow leaves are carried off by the wind, causing these toms to

glitter through the grove. No one, then, need feel repugnance here to proceed ; for young men and maidens, who by no means smell of the grave, and who know as yet too little of life to think of death, in the days of their love's enchantment, when every thing looked bright wherever they in their gladness roved, have often, as at Norwood, where the Rambler's Rest attracted them, turned aside first and entered the verdant enclosure to explore the sepulchres, moved with pity and delight, breathing perhaps with a blush some name that before had never passed the lips, while talking of their friends or kinsfolk, and telling some little sad tale of brother Harry or their sister Anne, whose bones are there long mingled with their native clay, and from each of whose graves they seem to think a voice can be heard, saying,

" Thus let my memory be with you, friends !

Thus ever think of me !

Kindly and gently, but as of one

For whom 'tis well to be fled and gone—

As of a bird from a chain unbound,

As of a wanderer whose home is found *."

It has been remarked as an "exquisite and beautiful thing in our nature, that when the heart is touched and softened by some tranquil happiness or affectionate feeling, the memory of the dead comes over it most powerfully and irresistibly." So it is felt here. These young women of the common people, whom Richardson describes when relating how he used to write letters for them in answer to their lovers, one of whom, when asked to indite, said, "I cannot tell you what to write, but," her heart on her lips, "you cannot write too kindly," seem to have quite a predilection for reading tumular inscriptions, which, to say the truth, can be made to accord easily with sweet love-anthologies and songs of the affections ; for oh ! how many disappointed hopes, how many tender recollections, how much of generosity and affection, are implied in many of the simple words that meet our eyes in this place, where Love might be represented kneeling at the feet of some sleeping figure, his smart bow broken ; Faith at the head ; Youth and the Graces mourners. The lines for the epitaph, without being necessarily exclusive of highest thoughts, might stand as of old,

" ——— Qui nunc jacet horrida pulvis,

Unius hic quondam servus amoris erat."

In one of our old plays, Cleanthes, while taking such a walk as this, says,

" I wonder whence that tear came, when I smiled

In the production on't ; sorrow's a thief

That can, when joy looks on, steal forth a grief."

Such might be the remark now, observing thus "the tear forgot as soon as shed, the sunshine of the breast," the pensive stroll where hearts keep company, each finding in the other a harbour for its rest. "What a fine instrument the human heart is!" exclaims an English author. "Who shall fathom it? Who shall sound it from its lowest note to the top of its compass? Who shall put his hand among the strings and explain their wayward music? The heart alone, when touched by sympathy, trembles and responds to their hidden meaning." Whether it be that Love is known to be no inhabitant of earth, and therefore to be associated with the memory of those who are no longer of it, or from a consciousness that it is with cypress branches Love has wreathed its bower, making its best interpreter a sigh; or from observing that love and death do not much differ, since they both make all things equal; or that in a place of mirth there is no room for love's laments, since either men possess or else forget; or that joy itself must have some tragedy in it, else it will never please; or that as

" ————— The very first

Of human life must spring from woman's breast,
Our first small words be taught us from her lips,
Our first tears quench'd by her, so our last sighs
Are often breath'd out in a woman's hearing,
When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
Of watching the last hour of him who led them,"

and therefore woman's love and death are in the mind associated; or whether the fact results from some inexplicable connexion which needs a scintillating brain to trace disparting bliss from its neighbour pain, defining their pettish limits, and estranging their points of contact,—one who in Love's own college has spent sweet days a graduate may be heard bidding us remark, how it is near or among the tombs that those who love each other, and to whom even the blue skies seem fairer because they love, often keep their guileless tryst

"Only to meet again more close, and share
The inward fragrance of each other's heart,
Unknown of any, free from suspicious eyes."

Hark to the sweet voice which whispers, "I am attended at the cypress grove south of the city." What hast thou to do with tombs or those who come from deathbeds, funerals or tears? Hast thou prepared weak nature to digest a sight so much distasteful? Hast seared thy conscience? The rich and stately, who do not gratify one's predilection for happy faces, who are but marble in their sense, and whose hearts are often more heavy than a tyrant's crown, may have only a suspicious answer; and truly, standing as we do where death so eloquently, and yet mildly, proclaims the equality of us all, this is an occasion when

some one may exclaim with a celebrated writer, "Would that I lived more among the people!" Would that some at least of my friends were among those who, in order to borrow a little money, have not, like Marie d'Anjou, wife of Charles VII., their own valet-de-chambre to apply to, and who can count on obtaining all they want by leaving only in his hands a Bible in pledge, as that queen wrote, saying, "pour laquelle somme lui avons baillé et gaigé nostre Bible *;" but who have to strip their poor chest of drawers and their whitewashed walls of nearly every thing, and repair with it all to a stranger, and who, in fact, have always half their clothes and furniture at his shop, or, as they tell us smilingly, "at their uncle's." It is strange that the amiable author of *Men and Manners* should say, dissuading some one from forming acquaintance with the poor, "Persons in an inferior station to yourself will doubt your good intentions and misapprehend your plainest expressions. All that you swear to them is a riddle or downright nonsense. You cannot by possibility translate your thoughts into their dialect. They will be ignorant of the meaning of half you say, and laugh at the rest." One can understand certainly that a metaphysician or a sophist, who must be proclaiming his thoughts to all the world, will not be likely to please any of the people who can have no feelings or tastes in common with such transcendental individuals; but let a man be only natural, and content to pass for a son of Adam, and however soft they may find his hands, or high they may suspect his birth to be, he is one of themselves in an instant, and entitled to all the privileges that they can confer. "Now, as companions," says the author of *Sibyl*, "independent of every thing else, they are superior to any that I have been used to. They feel and they think. If they do want our conventional discipline, they have a native breeding which far excels it. Compared with their converse, the tattle of our saloons has in it something humiliating. It is not merely that it is deficient in warmth, and depth, and breadth; that it is always discussing persons and cloaking its want of thought in mimetic dogmas, and its want of feeling in superficial raillery; it is not merely that it has neither imagination, nor fancy, nor sentiment, nor feeling, nor knowledge to recommend it; but it appears, even as regards manner and expression, inferior in refinement and phraseology." Curran said truly that "the judgment despises it and the heart renounces it." Now, all this has an immediate relation to our present subject; for, as Lord Jeffrey observes, in allusion to one of Crabbe's poems, "We cannot conceive any walk of gentlemen and ladies made for drawing-rooms, all being in the whistling of their snatch-up silks that should furnish out such a picture as is fur-

nished here;" but the simple, deeply-feeling, merry, and yet thoughtful common people, who form, happily, the far greater part of our fellow-creatures, the spirit of whose women can bear up against more than all the philosophers can master, each of whose sons and daughters—"cui sapie immundo Sacra conteritur Via socco," as the old poet says—of imperturbable good temper, and an unconscious practical philosophy that defies care and all its works, has tears of pity as readily as laughter in soft eyes, will sometimes take a walk like this without either insensibility or gloom. Their melancholy and their mirth become them equally. Their sadness is a kind of mirth, so mingled as if mirth did make them sad, and sadness merry; those darker humours that stick misbecomingly on others, on them live in fair dwelling. Many a pair of such friends will pass an evening hour thus deliciously, though it may deserve, perhaps, to be written in red letters in their future history; for one of the parties in each may have gained another revelation of the beauty and excellence of woman's character, ever potent, in all ranks of life, to mould our destiny; since it still continues true, what Strabo says every one knows, that women are more religious than men, and that they invite men to pay more attention to divine things, to observe festivals and to make supplications, and that it is rare for a man who lives all alone by himself to care for any thing of the sort, *σπάνιον δ' εἰ τις ἀνὴρ καὶ αὐτὸν ζῶν εὐρίσκεται τοιοῦτος* *. Men seem to regard this indifference as arguing a masculine character; women know better. The "eye-judging sex" have more tact and insight into character than men; as Hazlitt says, "they find out a pedant, a pretender, a blockhead sooner." The explanation is, that they trust more to the first impressions and natural indications of things, as to physiognomy, without troubling themselves with a learned theory of them.

"O women! that some one of you would take
An everlasting pen into your hands,
And grave in paper (which the writ shall make
More lasting than the marble monuments)
Your matchless virtues to posterities;
Which the defective race of envious man
Strives to conceal!"

Woman often has need, like Juliet, of many orisons to move the heavens to smile upon her state, which is so liable to be crossed; she will pause and at least look them here; and, in truth, appearing thus at times like a vision of Heaven unto us, we have not unfrequently to wonder how high her thoughts are above ours.

"Man is a lump of earth; the best man spiritless
To a woman; all our lives and actions

But counterfeits in arras to her virtue.

——— She is outwardly

All that bewitches sense, all that inspires ;

Nor is it in our cunning to uncharm it.

And when she speaks—oh ! then music

To entrance, making the wild sea, whose surges

Shook their white heads in Heaven, to be as midnight

Still and attentive, steals into our souls

So suddenly and strangely, that we are

From that time no more ours, but what she pleases !”

Truly, if such a testimony be of worth, I for one, as Piniero says, “would not harm a dog that could but fetch and carry for a woman.” In this particular instance they contrive, in their own feminine way, without uttering a word of censure or professing even to like a moral lecture, or any thing holy, to undeceive us. Like one of Titian’s faces, they do not look downward ; they look forward beyond this world. Nor by mingling love’s discourse do they think to abuse the strictness of this place, or offer injury to the sweet rest of these interred bones. “*Ils se réjouissoient tristement,*” says Froissart of the English, “*selon la coutume de leur pays.*” Perhaps we are about to notice an instance of which we need not be ashamed. I think it is a French writer who observes that England’s dear, artless daughters are often pleased to visit graves, and near them

“——— To meet the welcome face

True to the well-known trysting place.”

The high have illuminated saloons to meet their friends in ; the low are content with this pensive spot.

“——— Not a leaf

That flutters on the bough more light than they,

And not a flow’r that droops in the green shade

More winningly reserv’d.”

So you see the merry-hearted are sometimes induced to take the road of the tombs to hear whispered archly, while straying through them, something of woman’s ways and woman’s lore, which imbue our life with affection, developing all the kindly feelings of our nature ; to witness proof, perhaps, of woman’s love for mothers, which nothing interrupts, since to an absent mother, whether dead or aged, a maiden’s thoughts, if she be not of the proud, rich races, that know nothing of this road, will ever recur in such a scene, though it be as here to say with a sweet sigh in what shaded, lovely spot she would wish, when they must part, to place her parent’s bones. Thus are the joyous led among the sepulchres to read many lessons, to mark how the earth of sleep is often cast on a front of eighteen springs, to feel that

"Youth may revel, yet it must
Lie down in a bed of dust ;"

and even to draw the very conclusions that open a way to the centre,—

"For who is so busy in every place as youth
To read and declare the manifest truth?"

There is nothing, therefore, in the name inscribed by the way which forbids us to proceed with spirits as light as any class can boast of to take this road, trodden so frequently by the elastic feet of young and happy people,

"With archness smiling in their eye
That tells youth's heartfelt revelry,
And motion changeful as the wing
Of swallow wakened by the spring ;
With accents blithe as voice of May,
Chanting glad Nature's roundelay."

And if the subject at the bottom be very mournful, as no doubt it is, the objects which it will present us with may even inspire for that reason the greater pleasure ; for, as a great author says, "We see in needleworks and embroideries it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground ;" or, as Hazlitt says in his charming essay upon Merry England, "I do not see how there can be high spirits without low ones." Perhaps, however, for venturing syllables that some grim chance-comer will think do ill beseem the quiet glooms of such a piteous scene, forgiveness must be asked ; though I have only sought to enrich my tissue with

"Those golden threads all women love to wind,
And but for which man would cut off mankind."

I have only sought to season this book with that which is the salt to keep humanity sweet ; or, if such a simile may be permitted, to make it from the beginning to the end resemble the letter S, which is wittily said to be an excellent travelling companion, because it can turn any number of miles into smiles ; for, in truth, the readers who come to such pages generally have no Warburtonian disdain for "that part of literature in which boys and girls decide." "The enthusiast Fancy was a truant ever ;" and as for the associations which have dictated such passages, why seek to explain them ? Some feelings defy analysis. "They gleam upon us beautifully," as a great writer says, "through the dim twilight of fancy, and yet, when we bring them close to us, and hold them up to the light of reason, they lose their beauty all at once, and vanish in darkness." If on these three last roads there should be more mention

made of Love and of the amenity of female influence than in the preceding walks through life's enchanted forest, where we had a right, perhaps, to expect more abundantly the romantic varieties arising from the passion which plays so great a part in human life, it should be remembered that there is less danger in such allusions when we are near the sanctuary where the faults of passion are expiated, on the road of that age where its force is weakened, and at that ultimate bourne where it passes into the eternal source of its felicity. Reader, from the first I fear that some have judged these walks too trivial, others too severe. Grant a pardon here; and yet ere long, perhaps, you will perceive what interest Youth and Love have in such scenes, and that those who feel the latter are really the fittest persons to serve for chorus to this tragedy, since such may be entitled what we are about to witness, for what are tragedies but acts of death? and therefore those who take this road along with us are wholly bent to tragedy's discourse. Let us, then, proceed to mark the openings to the centre which are presented on this very ultimate path of the forest which conducts us to the nation of the dead—the *ἔθνεα νεκρῶν*.

To the first of these avenues men may be conducted by a natural repugnance to follow to its end every other path but that one in which the fears incident to nature at the prospect of its dissolution are dissipated, or at least diminished; and that one is found to lead to the centre like all the rest, and to the faith which in every age has delivered mankind from them. Following the remark of an ancient forester, if we may so call an author who has observed the trees with great minuteness, we cannot wonder that our frail flesh should be subject to an early decay, when iron itself turns to corruption. "*Obstitit eadem naturæ benignitas,*" says Pliny, "*exigentis a ferro ipso pœnas rubigine, eademque providentia nihil in rebus mortalibus faciente, quam quod infestissimum mortalitati *.*" The forest at all seasons presents a striking analogy with human life in the images of death which it presents on every side; and what is wonderful, the trees, in the mystic language that none may fathom, are associated with the destiny of mankind, as in the cry of the angel which we hear chanted at All Saints, saying, "*Nolite nocere terræ et mari neque arboribus quoadusque signemus servos Dei nostri in frontibus eorum.*" "The trees," says Pliny, "are liable to diseases. *Quid enim genitum caret his malis †?*" "Trees," he continues, "are subject, like men, to maladies and death—to influence of the atmosphere, diseases in the limbs, debility of parts, societate hominum quoque cum hominum miseriis. Sometimes even pestilence sweeps over whole tracts of the forest, as over

the human race, causing death to certain classes, *nunc servitia, nunc plebs urbana vel rustica* *." Within the last twelve years a mortality began amongst the young larch-trees. First the tops withered and died, then the ends of the side branches, and so gradually in the course of five years the trees died altogether. The disease has spread now to the older trees, and those of seventy years are now dying in the same manner, whether growing in the finest and deepest or in the most barren and rocky soils, and in those most suited to them. The pestilence exists in Oxfordshire and in the north of England, as also in the south of Scotland. Many endeavours have been made to trace the cause of this mortality, but hitherto in vain. But at all times the trees are subject to diseases. Some of them are traced to insects. There is the *bostrichus pinastre*, a beetle that dissects the pine; the *bostrichus laricis*, or beetle that dissects the larch; the *bostrichus abietiperda*, the beetle that dissects the fir; the *phalæna noctua piniperda*, the owl butterfly of the pine, and many other insects that destroy forest life. Sometimes, all of a sudden, a certain species, which only appeared at rare intervals, and which was regarded as inoffensive, is multiplied prodigiously, and exercises great ravages, as was the case with the *lentredo* pine fifteen years before Delamarre wrote, the resinous trees being more exposed to these ravages than others. Forests are subject to many insidious diseases. Like men, they are liable to endemic, epidemic, and contagious maladies; to wounds, to hemorrhages, weakness, lethargy, consumption, blotches, leprosy, wens, and deformities. They are subject to accidental and natural disasters, to combustion by the sun, to be dried up by atmospheric causes, to rotting away †. Behold these trunks of trees which lie mouldering on each other by thousands, not indeed returning to earth, for it is proved that the wood does not come from the ground, and, in fact, no one can tell whence it comes, unless it be from the air. Well, that it rots away thus is certain, while young scions sprout up without number from their half-decomposed progenitors. One need not say what all this represents; and yet the death of trees by old age is inexplicable; for their life is maintained by the layer of sap which every year increases the strength of the wood, and nothing ought to disturb this order of nature; so that most scientific foresters are now of opinion that the death of trees must always be ascribed to some accidental causes. Die, however, after certain periods, all sires of the forest must. These majestic trees, whose wrinkled forms have stood age after age, like patriarchs of the wood, must fall and perish. Though no lightnings should ever strike its head,

* xvii. 2.

† Delamarre, *Traité de la Culture des Pins*.

and no fierce whirlwind shake its stedfast root, yet must it fall, its leafy tresses fade, and its bare, scattered antlers strew the glade. But this is not all the analogy that exists between the forest and our life; for the natural date is in both anticipated often by artificial causes. For trees that have been wounded some remedies, it is true, are prescribed. Duhamel thus showed that if such wounds are covered with glass before the surface stripped of the bark has time to dry, and then excluded from the action of the atmosphere, a complete cure is effected. More recent experiments by Trécul confirm the fact, and various compositions are prescribed to form cataplasms whereby the wood and bark can be renewed. It is well known, too, that what is termed hemorrhage in trees can be stopped in them as in animals, by means of the same astringents. But man comes into the forest more frequently to effect the death than the cure of trees. The scene is changed! and it is the woodman who has marred it, the trees no longer forming a green labyrinth, but strewing all the ground as so many sylvan corpses that fell before the foe. Hear how the poet describes him:

"Alone he works—his ringing blows
Have banish'd bird and beast;
The hind and fawn have canter'd off
A hundred yards at least;
And on the maple's lofty top
The linnet's song has ceased.

"No eye his labour overlooks,
Or when he takes his rest;
Except the timid thrush that peeps
Above her secret nest,
Forbid by love to leave the young
Beneath her speckled breast.

"The woodman's heart is in his work,
His axe is sharp and good:
With sturdy arm and steady aim
He smites the gaping wood;
From distant rocks
His lusty knocks
Re-echo many a rood.

"His axe is keen, his arm is strong;
The muscles serve him well;
His years have reach'd an extra span,
The number none can tell;
But still his lifelong task has been
The timber tree to fell.

" Oh ! well within his fatal path
The fearful tree might quake
Through every fibre, twig, and leaf,
With aspen tremour shake ;
Through trunk and root,
And branch and shoot,
A low complaining make !

" Oh ! well to him the tree might breathe
A sad and solemn sound,
A sigh that murmur'd overhead,
And groans from under ground ;
As in that shady avenue
Where lofty elms abound !

" No rustic song is on his tongue,
No whistle on his lips ;
But with a quiet thoughtfulness
His trusty tool he grips,
And, stroke on stroke, keeps hacking out
The bright and flying chips.

" Stroke after stroke, with frequent dint
He spreads the fatal gash ;
Till, lo ! the remnant fibres rend
With harsh and sudden crash,
And on the dull resounding turf
The jarring branches lash !

" Oh ! now the forest trees may sigh,
The ash, the poplar tall,
The elm, the birch, the drooping beech,
The aspens—one and all,
With solemn groan
And hollow moan,
Lament a comrade's fall !

" Ay, now the forest trees may grieve
And make a common moan
Around that patriarchal trunk
So newly overthrown ;
And with a murmur recognize
A doom to be their own !

" No zephyr stirs : the ear may catch
The smallest insect hum ;
But on the disappointed sense
No mystic whispers come ;
No tone of sylvan sympathy,
The forest trees are dumb.

"The deed is done ; the tree is low
 That stood so long so firm ;
 The woodman and his axe are gone,
 His toil has found its term ;
 And where he wrought the speckled thrush
 Securely hunts the worm *."

The first cutting of a forest is called by the Germans the *sombre slaughter*, "*dunkelschlag*," because when felled for the first time all the umbrageous tops of trees that had stood close together cover the ground with a dark mantle. This first slaughter is followed by a second, called "*lichtschlag*," and in fine by a third, which is the definitive one, called "*abstribschlag* †;" the French call "*blanc-estoc*," or "*coupe blanche*," a total cutting with no standards left. Some woods are suffered to grow up to maturity, under the denomination in France of "*futaies*," formed of large aged forest trees ; others are cut down every eight, twelve, fifteen, or eighteen years, and bear in that country the administrative title of "*taillis*," or *copses*, being treated like the human race in the time of national wars, when the felling of men is organized by statistic rule like the felling of these *copses*, which can only furnish poles or faggots. Both are cut down repeatedly at fixed intervals, which are always short for the reason that one cannot wait, and that one expects from them only a speedy return. Foresters, like martial rulers, conduct their work of death according to exact observations respecting the utility to be obtained. There is another analogy, too, of a different kind, when we think of the supreme King and the administration of his moral forest, in which the deaths of men are determined by divine views of utility. "In good soil," says Buffon, "one gains by deferring to cut a *copse-wood*, and in land where there is no deep soil, wood should be cut young." Wood should be cut at that age when the growth of the tree begins to diminish. In the first years they increase more and more, that is, the increase of the second year is greater than that of the first, and the increase of the third is greater than that of the second, and so it goes on to a certain age, after which it diminishes ; and this is the moment when the wood should be cut, in order to draw from it the greatest profit ; the determination, however, of which moment is not easy, as Varenne-Fénille observes. Cotta says that the best age for cutting oaks is from a hundred and fifty to two hundred years ; elm, ash, and lime, from sixty to a hundred and twenty years ; birch and aspen, from forty to eighty years ‡. Observations of this kind become affect-

* Hood. † Baudrillart de l'Administration forestière.

‡ Cotta, Principes fondamentaux de la Science forestière.

ing, not to say solemnly impressive, when we are reminded of what is said respecting the unprofitable tree, and of its being doomed by the divine Forester as only cumbering the ground. "The cutting down of trees in well-regulated pine forests," says Delamarre, "is performed with discretion and discernment. It is done gradually—repeatedly, but never all at once, so as to cause the pines to pass suddenly from a state of close society into one of isolation and separation, the one from the other*." Such are the analogies presented by the poor trees; for thus it is too with men: they are sometimes in cold blood reserved to a certain age, and then cut down in this manner systematically; and at other times, without the employment of such human instruments as governments constitute, Death, God's woodman, comes into the forest of human life, and at one time, to our eyes rudely and indiscriminately, at another with visible discretion, at all times, no doubt, according to the rules of perfect wisdom and perfect mercy, cuts down thus

"No passive unregarded tree,
A senseless thing of wood,
Wherein the sluggish sap ascends
To swell the vernal bud—
But conscious, moving, breathing trunks,
That throb with living blood!

"No forest monarch, yearly clad
In mantle green or brown,
That unrecorded lives, and falls
By hand of rustic clown—
But kings, who don the purple robe
And wear the jewell'd crown†."

Nor is even this all, for every year the spectacle of death is presented on the forest roads, and, what is remarkable, in a way so as to grieve and almost startle those who pass; for

οἱ περ φύλλων γενεῇ, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνθρώπων.

From the wild autumnal west wind's unseen presence the dead leaves are driven like ghosts flying from an enchanter—

"Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes—hastening to
Their wintry bed."

It is that summer itself dies—

"By the lengthening twilight hours,
By the chill and frequent showers,

* Delam. *Traité de la Culture des Pins.*

† Hood.

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By the flow'rets pale and faded,
 By the leaves with russet shaded
 By the silence of each grove
 Vocal late with notes of love,
 By the meadows overspread
 With the spider's wavy thread,
 By the soft and shadowy sky,
 By the thousand tears that lie
 Every weeping bough beneath,
 Summer ! we perceive thy death.
 Summer ! all thy charms are past !
 Summer ! thou art waning fast !
 Scarcely one of all thy roses
 On thy faded brow reposes ;
 Day by day more feebly shining,
 Sees thy glorious beams declining,
 Though thy wan and sickly smile
 Faintly lingers yet awhile.
 Thrush and nightingale have long
 Ceased to woo thee with their song ;
 And on every lonely height
 Swallows gather for their flight.
 Streams that in their sparkling course
 Rippling flow'd, are dark and hoarse ;
 While the gale's inconstant tone,
 Sweeping through the valleys lone,
 Sadly sighs, with mournful breath,
 Requiems for sweet Summer's death."

And yet how suddenly has the change come on !

" Swift summer into the autumn flowed,
 And frost in the midst of the morning rode,
 Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
 Mocking the spoil of the secret night.
 The rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
 Paved the turf and the moss below.
 The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
 Like the head and the skin of a dying man.
 And Indian plants of scents and hue
 The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
 Leaf after leaf, day after day,
 Were massed into the common clay."

Thus, then, does the natural forest familiarize those who traverse it with the thought of the end appointed to all flesh. And if we consider it right, there is no path so much beaten as that of the tombs. It is even, for a different reason from that so lately noticed, the path of the youth still more than of the old man ; the path of the gay and active still more than of the grave and sedate. " Flores," says the spouse, " apparuerunt in terra nostra ;

tempus putationis advenit *.” “Vix nascitur flos,” adds Antonio de Escobar, “et jam de amputatione agitur †.” “These waves of beauties, of diamonds, of flowers, and plumes, rolling to the music of Rossini, whither tend they?” asks Chateaubriand at a grand reception in the French embassy at Rome. “Plainly you can discern,” says Petrarch in one of his sonnets, “how quickly every creature speeds to death, and what need the soul has to walk lightly, without burden, towards the dangerous pass.” On the words of our Lord, “Modicum et jam non videbitis me,” St. Augustin says, “Hoc modicum longum nobis videtur, quoniam adhuc agitur; cum finitum fuerit, tunc sentiemus quam modicum fuerit ‡.”

But what direction is to be had here in all this answering our purpose? where is the opening to the centre? for that is the quest in which we are now concerned. Flaminee, in the old tragedy of Vittoria Corombona, addressing Brachiano when he appears to her after his death, when the first impression of terror subsides, proposes the very question which it behoves us to have answered by some one here; for he demands

“In what place art thou? in yon starry gallery?
Or in the cursed dungeon?—No? not speak?
Pray, then, resolve me, what religion’s best
For a man to die in?
That’s the most necessary question.
Not answer? are you still, like some great men
That only walk like shadows up and down,
And to no purpose?”

The dead man makes no answer; though other spectres, it is said, have solved men’s doubts. However, without waiting in hopes of better success to interrogate a ghost, let us observe what we can gather from the living, and from each index on the road, marking them all in passing according to our wont.

The first signal, then, that seems placed here by the wayside is constituted by the natural fear and repugnance which move men who are destitute of central principles forming the light and hopes of faith.

“——— Oh! that the dream
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
Raking the cinders of a crucible
For life and power, even when his feeble hand
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law
Of this so lovely world!”

* Cant. 2.

† In Evang. Pancg. vol. vi.

‡ Tract. 101 in Joan.

Such is the wish of nature, shrinking from the thought of its mortal condition, as with the duchess of Gloucester saying,

"Death, at whose name I oft have been afraid,
Because I wish'd this world's eternity."

"*Utinam minus vitæ cupidus fuisset!*" exclaims Cicero, writing to his wife and children *. "If prosperous," says the poet, "men would be never ready to exchange this light."

"*O quam tu cupias ter vivere Nestoris annos,
Et nihil ex ulla perdere luce voles!*"

Curiatius accuses the air of Tivoli, because from the admired waters of that delightful spot he descends to the grave; which makes the poet add, for sole consolation,

"*Nullo fata loco possis excludere: cum mors
Venerit, in medio Tibure Sardinia est.*"

"To those," says St. Thomas of Villanova, "who are rooted in earth, hard and terrible is the separation! Think of their bitter tearing up in death, and wish not to take deep roots like them †." Catholicism, therefore, by its detaching men from the love of riches, prepares an escape for them from this first evil; since, even as the poet could recognize,

"*Rebus in angustis facile est contemnere vitam.*"

And men centrally disposed have no roots of affection in the wealth, however great, with which they may have been entrusted.

But further, to nature's wholly unaided eye the thought of death and of all its adjuncts can only inspire melancholy and aversion. The "*serus in cælum redeas*" is then the sole wish which it can entertain or deem reasonable for those whom it esteems. The decree of the ancient sisters signifies the supreme calamity,

"*Tarda sit illa dies et nostro senior ævo.*"

Such solitary nature, unsustained even by heroic tendencies which require a supernatural confirmation, sees only what is lost by this departure, as when Warwick dying says,

"My parks, my walks, my manors that I had
Even now forsake me; and, of all my lands,
Is nothing left me but my body's length."

In most cases nature thus bereft can take no other view of a friend's departure but that of the pagan poet,

"*Vos cinis exiguus, gelidæque jacebitis umbrae.*"

* Epist. xiv. 4.

† In Ascensione Dom. i.

There are hopes among the living, it says with the Sicilian bard ;
the dead are without hope—

Ἐλπίδες ἐν ζωῶσιν, ἀνέλπιστοι δὲ θανόντες*.

"The doctrine of the resurrection for all practical purposes was so novel, that its introduction by the Gospel caused an innovation," as Gerbet remarks, "in funeral language ; for the pagans used the word 'positus' in their epitaphs, which the Christians changed to 'depositus,' to express that it is but a deposit in the grave, which will be called for †."

If there be a vague idea of life beyond the tomb, it seems, when alone naturally existing, to be a sentiment as unsatisfactory as the prospect of annihilation. To be added to the black flock is the poet's expression, which does not seem calculated to exhilarate the desponding ‡. That indefinite expectation of another existence only produces such moments as the poet describes in these lines :

" — As one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn,
Expunge the world ;—so fared she gazing there,
So blacken'd all her world in secret §."

In fact, the merely natural view of the term of human life is that which Homer takes when he says, describing the fate of Hypsenor, "Over his eyelids death threw a night like gloom, and a merciless end overwhelmed him ||." Or that followed by Virgil, relating the unresigned death of Camilla in that magnificent line,

"Vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras ¶."

Of this indignation we find avowals even on the ancient tombs. Parents grieving for the death of their children used to express their sorrow thus : "Dis iniquis, qui rapuerunt animulam tuam," &c. Similarly we have this inscription at Rome :

"Procope. manus. Lebo. contra.
Deum. qui. me. innocentem sustulit.
Quæ vixit annos xx. Pos. Proclus."

More religious parents used to say that they erected the tomb "contra votum," which expression even some Christians adopted,

* Theoc.

† Esquisse de Rome, &c.

‡ Od. i. 20.

§ Tennyson.

|| Il. v. 68.

¶ xi. 831.

as in an inscription found on the Latin Way, with the monogram of Christ,

“Val. Nice. qu. ann. x.
Val. Exsypius. Filice
Contra votum.”

A certain mother in the time of Claudius placed this epitaph: “Filiis suis infelicissimis, qui ætate sua non frui, fecit mater scelerata.” The latter term is thus to be explained: “Sceleratus, in quo fit scelus; scelerosus, per quem fit*.” But it will be said, perhaps, without proceeding to what you view as the centre, men of wisdom and virtue have higher conceptions naturally of death than all this indicates. It may be so, but they are no less driven to look out for some specific against the dread of it beyond what human philosophy or mere natural virtue can supply; for as an old English poet says,

“Nature uninstructed never promised any man, by dying, joy.”

Or if for a moment poetry encouraged hope,

“His fantasy was lost, where reason fades
In the calm’d twilight of Platonic shades.”

Indeed, your philosophers themselves acknowledge that they are more averse to the thought of death than the poor vulgar loving pleasure seem to be, who are comparatively indifferent about dying, saying that they are ready to go as others go, and content with the idea of being all together; they, on the contrary, will tell you that by reason of their own honourable labours they feel necessarily more closely bound to existence than the vulgar; though after all, perhaps, it is these latter who are familiar with pursuits which give to life its charm†. Men of mere literary habits, in fact, can have their chief amusement, such as it is, in security, ad infinitum, without wishing for a change. Johnson, as Hazlitt says, might sit in an arm-chair and pour out cups of tea to all eternity; and accordingly sedentary and studious men like him are the most apprehensive on the score of death. Nor can it be denied that truly wise men seem sometimes, when they take an exclusively natural view of things, to be more impressed with such fear than the ignorant. It is even holy fathers, like St. Ephrem, who are at times heard speaking as follows: “Soon you will pass from this life; you will have to traverse formidable places, frightful deserts, and we shall have no companion by the way, no parent, or brother, or friend to keep us company; our money will be of no use to

* Gerbet, *Esquisse de Rome*, &c., 78.

† Jeffrey’s *Essays*, vol. i. 85.

us there, nor our honours*. What terror," they continue, dwelling on the appalling side of this subject, "has the soul in that hour! For if he who travels to a distant land stands astonished on beholding a foreign people, and hearing a strange tongue, and seeing an unknown country for the first time, how will the soul be astonished, on emigrating from this world to the next, when it beholds there what is so new! As one who on a lengthened journey bound, takes leave of a sweet company of youths, and aged sires, and tender maidens, and cheerful fellow scholars, and mild preceptors, and sets off alone, so shall we leave this world†." "The hour will come," says again St. Ephrem, with an eloquence that might often perhaps be spared, "when man must leave all men and all things; and alone, abandoned by all, deprived of all succour, without a guide, without a companion, must depart hence speechless. The one hour will come, and all things will cease for him; a little fever, and all vanities will be reduced to nothing—one profound, dark, and bitter night, in which he will be led trembling to his Judge. Truly, O man, thou wilt then have need of many guides, many assistants, many prayers, many companions, when thy soul separates from thy body. Then will be a great fear and a great mystery. For if when we pass only from one region of this earth to another we want guides and directors, how much more shall we want them when we have to depart to the eternal world whence there is no return! I repeat it, you will in that hour have need of many assistants. That will be our hour, not other people's hour; our way, our hour, I say, and indeed a tremendous hour; the end of all, and the terror of all, the last difficult passage by which all must leave, the narrow way through which all must wind. Truly a bitter and direful cup is this; but we must all drink it, and no other. Great and occult is the mystery of death," he continues (and only for the sake of exposing what mere nature thinks of death would such words be cited here), "but no one knows the horror unless those who have felt it. Do you not mark what dreadful changes take place in those whom we see die? how they are seized, disturbed, agitated? what a cold sweat breaks out? Theirs is like the toil of those who gather in the harvest. How they move their eyes, how they grind their teeth, how they become stiff! Again, suddenly, how they endeavour to leap sometimes from the bed, as if trying to escape, though they cannot! They see then things which they never saw before, they hear from powers what they never heard before, and they suffer what they never suffered before; seeking for some one to save them, and there is no one who can

* Tractat. Minores.

† S. Ephrem: *Parrenses ad Monach.* 43.

deliver them; looking for companions, and there is no one to accompany them; asking for advocates, and there is no one who dares to stand their patron. Farewell, brother! alas! For there is no longer a brother, there is no longer an associate, or a friend. So, in fine, he is gone. The great, the formidable, the invincible, now as if no one, now as if he had never been born! What is man? Nothing—ashes and dust, a dream, a shadow. Then we who remain take charge of the dead body, and, as if it was a stranger, we carry it from what was its own house and lay it in the common earth, where lie the little and great, kings and people, tyrants and slaves, all reduced to one dust. There, as is the Æthiopian, so is he who was most beautiful; as is the old, so is the boy; and then, when all are there liquefied, and deformed, and crumbling to powder, we show each, one by one, saying, Lo, he was such a one! lo, he such another! This was such and such a king, this such and such a daughter, this such and such a youth—oh, how mighty once, how fair, how comely! Then we sigh and weep, beholding this great tremendous mystery; seeing there all ages dead, all beauty of bodies changed, all loveliness of countenance gone, all eloquence of tongue silent, all principality and power annihilated, all the pride of youth desolate; seeing how all the vain labour of man has perished, and that here is its end for ever*.” But break we off this fearful rhetoric, which can only profit us by contrasts that will meet us now. It shows that wisdom and learning yield no exemptions from that horror of death which will be found to drive some men upon the only path which is secure against it. It shows what is the exclusively natural view obtained on this road of the tombs. I do not say that it represents the view of death which is taken by all the young visitors who came upon this path along with ourselves, let them belong to what class of the population they may, for old Catholic traditions more or less sway them all; but it shows what is the view of death when men rhetorically represent it under a mere natural light, or knowingly and systematically turn from the centre, and try to pass aside through ways that lead from it, in allusion to whom, as well as to the ancient world, the poet may well exclaim,

“O genus attonitum gelidæ formidine mortis!”

From these harrowing anticipations and desolating thoughts respecting our end, central principles are found to provide a deliverance by means of a supernatural doctrine, of a moral discipline natural and wise, and of a partial restoration of the whole of our nature to its pristine harmony. Let us proceed with attention to notice these issues which are still remaining for those

* In SS. Patres tunc defunctos.

who have hitherto neglected to avail themselves on the preceding roads of all others ; since there are many, nearly to the last hours of their life,

“ — Whose soul, that should be shrin'd in heaven,
Solely delights in interdicted things,
Still wand'ring in the thorny passages,
That intercepts itself of happiness.”

In the first place, Catholicism seems to afford the greatest certainty and the most practical conviction of death being only the passage to another and better life—

“ Unfortunates on earth, we see at last
All death-shadows and glooms that overcast
Our spirits, fann'd away by its light pinions.”

It is not that the estimable men, who are separated from it by circumstances, may not give an intellectual assent to the truth of our immortality, and derive by unknown channels unknown aids towards happily realizing it for themselves ; but that the general tendency of mind which leads men personally to reject Catholicism in globo as superstition, is evidently not calculated to strengthen a practical belief in any article of the Apostles' Creed. Alanus de Insulis, refuting the Waldensians and Albigeois, whom many now regard as their own predecessors in the work of true reform, has to answer men, he says, “*qui dicunt quod anima perit cum corpore **.” On the other hand, the nearer men approach to Catholicity, the less are we surprised to hear them speak like Leibnitz, and say, “*There is nothing in the immateriality of souls, and in the preservation of souls after death, which I do not believe to be demonstrated or capable of demonstration †.*” The highest intellectual certainty does not indeed convey the same advantages as faith, but it is remarkable to find the former always existing in greatest abundance in Catholicism, where St. Thomas is heard saying, “*Contra naturam est animam sine corpore esse. Nihil autem, quod est contra naturam, potest esse perpetuum. Mors per accidens subsecuta est ; hoc autem accidens Christi morte sublatum est. Resurrectio, quantum ad finem, naturalis est ‡.*” But what is most significative is the intimate practical faith in a future life which reigns within that pale, where on their beads such multitudes are constantly meditating on the resurrection of our Lord as forming one of the glorious mysteries. It is there that we find perpetuated the perfect personal hope in a future state, which

* Alan. cont. Wald. et Alb. c. 27.

† Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement humain, liv. iv. 18.

‡ S. Thom. Sum. cont. Gent. lib. iv.

breathes in so many passages recorded of illustrious men, as where we read that St. Germain of Auxerre having dreamt at Ravenna that he was shortly to return to his country, understood the sign as indicating his death, that journey to the true country of his desires ; since

“ All life is but a wandering to find home ;
When we are gone, we're there.”

It is Catholicism which imparts the style of those who describe death as a passage to the brightness of eternal light, and not as the overshadowing of black wings, as where the poet says,

“ ———— Seu me tranquilla senectus
Exspectat, seu mors atris circumvolat alis *.”

“ The soul which has well run its course will feel on leaving the body,” says Faustus, abbot of Lerins, “ as if emerging into light after long darkness, into a royal palace from a cavern, or into a paradise embalmed with aromatic plants and flowers. How sweet is rest after laying down a heavy burden ! How delightful, after long enduring chains of captivity, to escape in freedom to one's country ! How joyful, after a long and perilous navigation, to arrive at the desired port ! Then we may deduce from this how delightful it will be to partake in the joy of angels, to ascend to that life where there will be no labours, nor sorrows, nor losses, nor weariness ; and, what is above all good, no vice, but eternal innocence, inviolate justice, unshaken security, and everlasting peace † ! ” It is Catholicism which seems to enable men to feel practically that we flee through death and birth to a diviner day ; that death must be the reward of trampling down the thorns which God has strewn upon the path of immortality ; that there is even no such thing as death, since, as a divine voice said to St. Bridget, “ That person lying before our eyes is not dead, the separation of the soul and body of the just being only a sleep, from which they waken to eternal life ‡ . ” It is Catholicism which suggests those keen, and in one sense beautiful, replies implying this faith which please so much in history, as when the monks from Ambaziac, with the parish priest and a crowd of people, came to the monastery where St. Stephen of Grandmont was reported to have just died, and having demanded admittance, the porter, who was unwilling that they should enter or assist at the funeral, which was to be private, made answer, “ What is this ? why weep and lament as

* ii. l.

† Fausti Abb. Lirincens. Serm. ad Monach. l, ap. Luc. Holst. Cod. Reg.

‡ Revel. S. Brig. iv. 40.

if he were no more ? Yea, he finds himself, I promise you, much better to-day than usual *.” It is Catholicism which inspires the poet in that beautiful sentence of Queen Margaret, saying,

“ — So part we sadly in this troublous world,
To meet with joy in sweet Jerusalem.”

It is Catholicism which causes birthdays to be unknown, and days of patron saints to be observed with such respect, a substitution which the old philosophy would probably have approved of, as may be inferred from what Cicero says when exposing the inconsistency of Epicurus desiring his birthday to be observed. “If a day,” he says, “were to be noted, why should it be his birthday, and not rather that on which he became wise? *Res tota non doctorum hominum velle, post mortem, epulis celebrari memoriam sui nominis †.*”

Observe how cheerfully Catholicism enables a person in the world to write on the necessity of dying. “Yes,” exclaims an illustrious lady, alluding to the immense benefit which it confers in this respect, “to lose for ever on earth is to find for ever in God; to lose for ever in time is to find for ever in eternity. O joys of earth, reflection of distant luminaries, in order to seize what is more than visionary in you, we must leave the region where you vanish! Ah! what does it matter if the veil of death be spread over a vain mirror, when on the rising of eternal light real existences appear? What does it matter, if life in relation with passing beings should be withdrawn when it will be replaced by life in relation with the eternal creative Fountain? And how should we not comprehend the depth and infinitude of this life and joy which are offered to us, when we understand all that the heart can contain, and all that the intelligence can experience ‡!”

But not alone does Catholicity seem to change men's views of death in regard to the knowledge of a future existence; it certainly tends to diminish by its supernatural doctrines respecting the goodness of God, and the efficacy of the suffrages of the Church on earth, the fears with which they would otherwise contemplate the prospect of that future existence. In venturing upon such ground I am only noticing what any one, however profane and ignorant, may remark in passing. The doctrine of atonement by the Man-God, the Son of Mary and the eternal Deity, comprising all its rigorous consequences as found in the Catholic Church, and there so understood and logically developed alone, explains the great central attraction which exists here. None of us are left in ignorance of this doctrine. We cannot

* Levesque, *Annal. Ord. Grandimont.* 1. † De Finibus ii. 31.

‡ *Etudes sur les Idées, &c.* ii. 416.

open a prayer-book or the life of any saint without seeing practical proof of its diffusion. The blessed Father Raymond Albert, for instance, who was the eighth general of the Order of Mercy in 1317, said in dying, "I hope all from the infinite merits of the blood of my Saviour, who has paid my caution-money and my ransom *." "All her hope of eternal good," says Sister De Changy, speaking of St. Jane de Chantal, "was founded on the merits of Jesus Christ †." The same is recorded of every religious person of whose last moments there is mention. Now we are not taught that it was only for saints and persons of consummate virtue that Christ died, as if it was only the perfect who could have hope founded on his merits. In Catholic countries, as in France, the Church has the significant precaution to cause the funeral train to pass before the cross of the cemetery, in order that the assistants may be reminded of the Passion of Christ, in reliance on which their late friend had departed to his rest. This doctrine inspires the institutions, the manners, the literature, and the poetry of all Catholic countries. Witness the noble drama of Calderon de la Barca, entitled *Devotion to the Cross*. "Let me stand here before this cross, and wait for death," says Eusebio, the culprit finding escape impossible, "O tree!" he exclaims, "on which Heaven has placed the true fruit, which compensates for the deceitful fruit that first caused men's ruin! Charming flower of the new paradise! Fertile and ever-verdant vine! bright arch of light, whose wondrous apparition announced peace to the world! Harp of the new David! Table of a second Moses! I am a poor sinner who claimeth thy protection of right; for God died upon thy sacred wood only to save sinners; and therefore, for the very reason that I am a sinner, thou owest me thy protection! Holy cross, which I have always adored with an especial devotion, permit me not, I beseech thee, to die without confession! I shall not be the first malefactor who placed on thee has confessed to God, and since another has done it before me, and obtained remission of his sins, I also will avail myself of the power of redemption which thou possessest." Then calling on Alberto, who had promised to hear his confession at his death, he expires. At the mass on the fifth feria of Easter week, the Church breaks forth in words that sanction this hope of men: "Surrexit Christus qui creavit omnia, et misertus est humano generi." What sublime and what cheering words "compassionating the human race!" On all occasions she teaches her children to invoke Christ under forms the most capable of allaying fear. So Petrus Cellensis, in his first sermon of Advent, exclaims, "Yea, come, O Jesus! but in

* Hist. de l'Ordre de la Mercy, 250.

† Mém. de S. Jeanne, iii. c. 2.

the clothes of thy infancy, not with weapons of war ; in humility, not in grandeur ; in the cradle, not on the clouds of heaven ; in the arms of thy Mother, not on the throne of thy Majesty ; on the ass's colt, not on the cherubins ; towards us, not against us ; to save, not to judge ; to visit in peace, not to condemn in anger. If Thou comest thus, O Jesus ! instead of flying from Thee, it is to Thee, it is to Thee that we shall fly." She teaches men, in fine, at that supreme hour, to call human sympathies in the forms of divine religion to their aid, and to invoke a Mother, as when Francis Thuanus before his execution repeated with his last breath the lines, "*Maria Mater gratiæ, Mater misericordiæ, tu nos ab hoste protege et hora mortis suscipe **." What strains, what sights are these for our poor frailty ! Well may it prize them ! The holy-seeming, hollow man is with more difficulty satisfied than Heaven. He who covets to glorify himself with honesty, glorifies divine mercy with no honour. If that religion, he says, were of so fine a web as wit and fancy spin it out here, then these defences would be just and save you ; but that is more substantial, and of another make, and sentence must pass. Thus does he drive men from the centre who were perhaps hastening to it ; for ill news, alas ! are swallow-winged, while what is good walks on crutches. But there are voices still to guide them, saying, Be not discouraged. Despair is a subtle pleader, and employed only by hell. Look at the poor, look at the unfortunate, look at sinners, from whose eyes continually their melting souls drop out,—see how they can pity and forgive, and deny themselves to relieve others more wretched ; and if in so corrupt a volume you can study goodness,—if even in their haunts upon earth there is so great a charity, despair not to find mercy in heaven, which is its eternal centre. Do not suppose, though you may be advised to do so by an admirable author, that because you cannot govern a kingdom, a school, or a family, without a fixed, steady, unrelaxing system, therefore the divine Ruler can have no tenderness, which would seem to interfere with letting things take their course, and no relief for individual distress, which would appear to induce a violation of stern and inflexible principles. Moreover, Catholicism, we are assured by one of its ablest expounders, has never made the small number of the elect an article of faith †. " In the first place, previous to any theological discussion, it distinguishes," he says, "between evil developing itself in a continued fever of idleness, and evil repressed at intervals by labours and suffering ; it sanctions the opinion that as the material quantity of good in the world surpasses that of the evil, so also, considering to what a

* Richebourg, *Ultima Verba*, &c.

† Lacordaire, *Conférences de Notre Dame de Paris*, tom. iv. 71.

degree virtue attains in many, metaphysically and morally, the good prevails at an incontestable elevation over the evil. It represents God," he adds, "not as beholding the human race on earth divided into two camps for ever separated, the one composed of monsters, the other of the blessed; but as seeing one family of fragile creatures, some more, others less virtuous, the evil of some serving to augment the virtue of others, and the virtue of some serving to expiate the evil of others, so that ten just would have sufficed to obtain pardon for a city of reprobates. Thus, under the divine action," concludes this eloquent Dominican, "the supernatural greatness of good in the Church compensates for the material quantity of evil; and humanity, in spite of its faults, does not present to Heaven that horrible spectacle with which some persons seek to overwhelm our faith. But independent of such considerations, the gravest theologians of the Church sanction these consoling views; for as Bergier argues, if the parables of the Gospel are to be invoked for proof, we must conclude from them that the number of the saved will be not small, but immense. In a corn-field the cockle has never yet been seen more abundant than the good crop. What fisherman has taken less good than worthless fish? In the parable of the talents two servants are recompensed, one only is punished; in that of the marriage feast, one only of the guests is driven out. The celebrated text of many called and few chosen, occurring but twice, is far from being clear, according to the fathers and commentators. On both occasions of its use it is said by them to mean, not that there are few saved, which would in the two cases be a contradiction to the parable that precedes and introduces it, but that many being called from a common grace become from being first the last, since some being chosen later by a special grace become from being last the first." The gate is narrow, but Catholicism, we are told, does not conclude that only a few can enter by it. Many, we read, enter by the wide gate, and few find the narrow; but it is not manifest that these words were applicable to all times. So far from it, the Vulgate, older, we must remember, than any existing Greek manuscripts, has translated the Hebrew phrase in a manner which makes them relate only to the beginning of the preaching of Jesus Christ; and in fact our Lord Himself makes the distinction, saying the way is narrow, and "when I am lifted up, I shall draw all things after me*." In fine, according to the same apologist, Catholicism sanctions this view, which explains the cheerfulness of its devout children, otherwise inexplicable, by reminding us of the three great classes of humanity which, by what he terms an admirable device of Providence, are saved, namely, children and the young, of whom more than the half die before

* Joan. xii. 32.

their fourteenth year ; women who are every where peculiarly endowed with the gift of faith and the gift of charity ; and the poor, who, whether conscious of it or not, carry on their shoulders the cross of their Saviour, and practise mortification, being the true penitents of the world, even to wearing a penitential dress, as one of our old poets representing poverty remarks, and who alone constitute an innumerable multitude of the saved, whether bearing their burden in the simplicity of the Catholic faith, or led astray and remaining in invincible ignorance among nations corrupted by schism and heresy. To these three classes, it is true, may be opposed the rest of the world, exposed indeed to great perils ; but even, continues this theologian, among this remainder, if it be hard for a rich man to pass, the divine voice added, that what is impossible to men is not so to God ; and no human mind can penetrate the secrets of divine mercy, or place limits to the atoning benefit of the Cross. Charity to the poor, kindness to the common people, a horror of injuring, oppressing, or even of giving any person of an inferior station an hour's pain or a moment's offence, is a very broad and delightful road that leads, we are assured by central principles, not to hell ; for pray observe that while our Lord promises mercy at the day of judgment to those only who follow, and misery only to those who shun it, the Psalmist seems to have anticipated the same judgment, when after saying, "*Convertantur peccatores in infernum : omnes gentes quæ obliviscuntur Deum,*" he adds, as if to explain the reason, "*quoniam non in finem oblivio erit pauperis : patientia pauperum non peribit in finem *.*" At all events, what is certain, conclude Catholic guides, is the goodness of God, the price which He has paid for our salvation, and the art with which He disposes the members and functions of the human family to open to a greater number the gates of eternal happiness. O comfortable words, tidings of joy ! These are no counterfeits. Thus peace from Catholicity visits the dying, as comes a calm unto a sea-wracked soul, ease to the pained, and light to the creation.

True, there are solemn and grave doctrines of Catholicism in harmony with what the conscience and the reason of mankind proclaim as to the different consequences of death in a future life ; but if attentively and correctly considered, instead of increasing, they assuage the apprehensions which nature would create for the dying, presenting them perhaps with phenomena of the present visible world to justify them. What are the purifying flames of which faith makes mention ? Painters and poets are not infallible in answering the question. Father Michael de Orenza, after describing the sickness and death of the

Marchioness Elizabeth de Moscoso, says that Marina de Escobar was apprised of her being in purgatory, of which the pain consisted in her being deprived of the vision of God, which she ardently desired *. And after all, let it be remembered that, as the greatest living theologian says with respect to this subject, "The true state of the question must be opened, separating those things which are strictly of faith from those which are contained within the limits of opinions. Porro duo hæc tantum quoad purgatorium de fide sunt, primo scilicet, ipsius existentia, secundo suffragiorum utilitatis †. Whether that word implies absolutely a place, in the material sense of the term, or a condition, remains, for aught one can see, wisely undetermined, excepting for popular purposes which require a cautious clothing of principles in words that will convey truth to the people. The Church, we are told, has decided nothing as to the nature or place of this suffering ‡. She pretends to know neither where these souls suffer, nor what they suffer, nor how they suffer §. But whatever opinion some may hold on these points, the general belief itself is too fruitful in hope to cause disquietude, and too consonant with reason to offend the intelligent. As a recent well-known author says, "There are too many degrees of moral worth and of moral unworth amongst mankind to permit of our supposing that there will be an abrupt division into two opposite eternal classes. There must be infinite shades of desert, and as many degrees of condition answering to them, resulting from what each individual makes for himself and carries away with him."

Already, then, we seem to have gone far towards hearing an answer to the question, "In what religion is it best to die?" "The author of the Seasons," says a great French observer, "died amidst all the consolations of philosophy, as M. de la Harpe amidst all the consolations of Catholicism; the one visited by men, the other visited by God." For smoothing this last road of the forest, Catholicism of these two sources of comfort is found thus experimentally to be the best. Hear again the same remarkable writer: "Marvellous fact! Bonaparte, this man of all ages, was a Christian in the nineteenth century. His testament begins thus: 'Je meurs dans la religion apostolique et Romaine, dans le sein de laquelle je suis né il y plus de cinquante ans.' In the third paragraph of the testament of Louis XVI. we read, 'Je meurs dans l'union de notre sainte mère l'église catholique, apostolique et Romaine.' The Revolution has left us many lessons; but is there among them a single one comparable to this? Napoleon and Louis XVI. making the same

* Vita Marin. P. ii. lib. ii. c. 16.

† Perrone, Tract. de Deo Creatore.

‡ Schaefflinacher, Lettres d'un Théologien, i. 515.

§ Id.

profession of faith! Would you learn the price of the cross? Seek in the whole world for what suits best virtue in adversity, or the man of genius in his death." Joannes Samoscius, chancellor of Poland, was a man of thought and of observation; and speaking of the Catholic Church he said, "In ejus gremio mori felicius est quam ab initio nasci;" adding what in reference to some wilful men may perhaps be no less true, "cum non nasci satius sit quam in hac non mori*." Wonderful are the examples of the effects of the central consolation. "If I do not deceive myself," says Antonio de Guevara, "and if I know any thing of this world, those whom we have seen crying when embarking at their birth, I doubt, I doubt whether we shall see laughing when they make land at their graves†." We are about to behold, nevertheless, how he even literally erred, if he intended his prediction to be general.

Not far from Sienna, among the Illicetanian trees, stands an Augustinian convent of celebrated sanctity. Here, in 1330, died Brother John Guccius, who among other signs of a happy departure gave this, says Crusenius, that he smiled in death‡. "A certain convert brother," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, "young in years, in Lucka, fell grievously sick, and being in his agony, as a monk related to me who was present, he began to laugh; and when one of the bystanders said, 'Paul, why do you laugh?' he replied, 'How should I not laugh? Lo our Lady is present, and ready to receive my soul!' It seems to me that the poet's verse was fulfilled in him,

‘Incipe, parve puer; risu cognoscere matrem.’

He was truly a boy, for he was simple and pure; and he was little, for he was humble and unassuming. Doubtless the Blessed Virgin exhibited some maternal gestures to the dying lad§. St. Francis of Assisi is represented in a celebrated picture as dying with a smile on his countenance. Of several persons we read that, phoenix-like, each died

“Finitque in odoribus ævum ||.”

The night before the death of the blessed Father Henry of Austria, through the whole convent of Barcelona a delightful music was heard. His agony was a continued ecstacy, and with the words, "Tu es Domine, spes mea," he expired¶. Father Michael de Orenza, in his letter to the count duke of Olivarez, tells him that Marina de Escobar expired smiling. "Whether,"

* Begerlinck, Apophtheg.

† L'Horloge des Princes, liv. iii. 1252. ‡ P. iii. 13. § vii. 53.

|| Met. xv.

¶ Hist. de l'Ordre de la Mercy, 255.

he says, "owing to a holy contempt for the things she was leaving, or to a foretaste of the joy of those which she was about to possess, it is a fact that she died with a smile. Some years previously," he says, "it had been revealed to her that before her death she would be rapt in ecstasy during many hours, and she used often to tell me to wait lest she should be buried alive*." Madame de Lezeau expressed her joyful readiness to depart by saying to the venerable Abbé Brady, after all the rites had been accomplished, "Now let the rowers give way—'vogue la gallère'." "Go thy ways," said the excellent Morgue in dying; "I promise thee the blessed are well off." Augustus Novello dying at St. Leonardus near Sienna, "Beheld," says Crusenius, "Christ and his angels standing round, who invited and received him†!" St. Clare dies smiling in the same company, as is represented in the celebrated picture by Murillo. "I am leaving all things to follow Jesus," said the Duchess de Liancourt at her death, alluding to the gospel on the preceding Sunday, which was the fourth after Pentecost. Father Nicolas Walkier, a Belgian Dominican of the convent of Bruges, expired with the words, "In Galilæa Jesum videbimus, sicut dixit nobis, Alleluia." He had revealed to a friend before that our Lord promised to be present at his death‡. Marina de Escobar relates an instance that fell under her own notice in a surprising manner. "On Wednesday," she says, "the 11th of April, 1628, after midnight I slept, and while I slept I found myself miraculously present in the convent of the Holy Cross of Valladolid, in the cell of the Lady Aloysia de Guzman, who was dying. I saw the cell illumined like heaven with a great light, and many angels in it§." Brother Raymond of Lausanne relates that Brother Gulielmus, in the convent of Anneey, declared he saw angels at his death, and that he received from them the kiss of peace. In presence of the whole convent he said aloud, "Gaudete, fratres, quia gaudium est in cœlis, et vos omnes eritis in gaudio illo||." "About three years ago," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, "a certain monk, named Werner, died in Eberbach, in years a youth and beardless, but in mind mature. As I have learned from his abbot, when dying, at first he seemed to see something that caused him terror, so that he began to cry out, 'Holy Mary, free me from them;' and those who heard his cries wondered, knowing that he was naturally taciturn, so as scarcely to answer a question. Soon after he said, 'Welcome, welcome, my dearest Lady!' and then with a placid countenance he expired; causing joy to the angels in heaven, but no small grief to the brethren in the

* Vit. Virg. M., P. ii. lib. iii. c. 2.

† P. iii. c. xi.

‡ De Jonghe, *Beigium Dominic.* 175.

§ P. ii. lib. ii. c. 20.

|| Do la Cerda, de *Excellentia Cœlestium Spirit.* c. 21.

monastery, for he was a good youth*." I only repeat what is chronicled; but we may certainly remark, by the way, how curious it is to find in such a modern work as the *Diary of a Late Physician*, composed by an author who probably had never read *Cæsar of Heisterbach*, an instance of fears expressed by the dying in words almost identical with those heard in the eleventh century, and reported by the monk in the above passage. "Doctor, keep them off!" cried the dying scholar described by Samuel Warren; who then says, "I once before heard these strange words from another dying patient. To me they suggest very unpleasant, I may say fearful, thoughts. What is to be kept off?" For this commentary being accused of injudicious sanctioning of superstitious terrors, he replied, "If we find several dying persons, of different characters and situations, concur in uttering in their last moments the same words, is it so unwarrantable for an observer to hazard an inquiry concerning their possible import†?" But to return to those scenes where joyful confidence was all through predominant. "Adam, the monk of Lucka, related to me," says again *Cæsar*, "the death of a certain knight that was very precious. 'There was,' he said, 'in Saxony a knight named Alardus, a man of such prowess that in the first tournament, in which he was knighted, he acquired with his own hand fourteen horses, who as a prudent man, ascribing that temporal honour not to his strength, but to God, restored them all; and bidding adieu to his companions and the world, took the habit of our order in the monastery of Lucka. And because the Lord proves his elect, He visited him with such an infirmity, that he would have been an object of horror to all but supernatural men. At his death he moved every one to tears by his words. He seemed then to have a prophetic spirit, and to know exactly what was passing in the Church, indicating what priests were saying mass at particular altars; and then declaring that he beheld Christ with his Mother and the saints, he expired‡.'" We read in the chronicle of the priors of the Grande Chartreuse that Petrus Faverius, prior of the Holy Cross, procurator of the whole order, while employed in a certain city upon affairs, fell sick, and that Lord Hubert, the prior, came to visit him, whose presence made him glad, and who administered the sacraments to him. But a wondrous vision is said to have been his; for on the departure of this holy man, the enemy of the human race appeared to stand before his bed, having a great book, in which were written all the sins of his past life, and this he held up to his face with a ferocious grin; and when the sick man could only say, that having confessed he had hopes of mercy, the spectre seemed to try more and more to make him despair; but

* vii. c. 55.

† Sam. Warren, *Diary*, chap. iv.

‡ xi. c. 19.

then the blessed Virgin Mary, with superhuman effulgence, having her divine Son in her arms, appeared to enter the room, and coming near said, "Brother, why fear? By this lovely Boy all thy sins are cancelled." Then the whole vision ceased suddenly, and the sick man felt ineffable joy; and shortly after, in the presence of Lord Hubert, to whom he told it, adding that the saints stood round him, expired. Bellarmine, when he beheld that his death was near, said, "Buona nova, buona nova, O che buona nova è questa *." Alquirinus, a Cistercian monk, formerly a physician, when he came to die, would not have recourse to a physician: and being asked by his abbot why he rejected the charity which he had shown to others, and seemed to regard death with such joyful familiarity, he replied, "Because whatever I consider in my mind and behold with my eyes affords me matter of joy and exultation. For the Lord has taken all sadness from my heart, and assured me of salvation by his wounds, so that I fear not death." But witness a scene of antic solemnity in the death of a bishop. It was Wednesday, the 1st of May, in the year 418. The gates of the cathedral of Auxerre are thrown wide open at the hour of matins. Clerks, people, magistrates, ladies, and devout women all flock in. The saintly Bishop Amateur is dying at the foot of the altar. When the rays of the morning had penetrated deeper into the vast sanctuary, the prelate raised himself, walked feebly to the pontifical chair, sat down, turning to Germain, and spreading out his pale hands towards him, said with a feeble voice, "O Germain! forbid all lamentations; prohibit tears." A light kindled in his eyes, his lips resumed their colour. The faithful perceived that he was about to address them for the last time. The people approached; but the bishop closed his eyes, and every one was rapt in admiration at such a beauteous death†. St. Pius V. expired repeating the vesper hymn of the day—

"Queresumus auctor omnium
In hoc Paschali gaudio,
Ab omni mortis impetu
Tuum defende populum."

Relating the death of Tasso in the convent of St. Onufrio, and contrasting it with the death of the author of the *Henriade* in the Hotel de Villette, Chateaubriand adds, "Comparez et voyez ce que la foi ajoute de beauté à la mort." But we must pass on. Reader,

"Look not so wilder'd; for these things are true,
And never can be born of atomies

* Jacob de Richebourg, *Ultima Verba Factaque Morientium*.

† Lefcuvre, *Hist. de St. Germ. l'Auxerrois*.

That buzz about our slumbers, like brain-flies,
 Leaving us fancy-sick. No, no. Be sure
 The restless spirit never could endure
 To brood so long upon one luxury,
 Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
 A hope beyond the shadow of a dream."

Let us proceed to observe further, how, in consequence of its moral discipline, or even of its only partial control over manners and thoughts, Catholicism changes the melancholy and fearful views of death which are incident to our nature. "There are four kinds of dying men," says Cæsar of Heisterbach: "some live well and die well, others live ill and die ill; others lived ill, but, by the grace of God, die well; and as forming a kind of strange exception to the general law, there are some who lived nearly to the end well, but seem to die ill, as if to verify the prophetic words, 'In peccato suo quod peccavit, morietur*.'" Here is, perhaps, the most solemn part of the road, the most appalling, dear young companion, to such persons as ourselves. We can all, however, perceive that an inestimable advantage accrues to those following it from the central wisdom, if it has influenced their lives and thoughts, or even penetrated deeply into their heart; for death is no foe to virtue, to a great love, or to sin repentant. It is no foe either, as Catholicism seems intent on proclaiming, to humility; and may we not all be humble? The old Church says with our ancient poet,

"Keep your minds humble, your devotions high;
 So shall ye learn the noblest part, to die."

But let us proceed with instances of the faculties not unfrequently manifested by the dying, when the incipient death of the body is leaving the spirit more unobstructed.

Anacharsis, finding Myson mending the handle of his plough in summer, asked him whether that was the season for ploughing, and received for answer, "It is the season for preparing the plough;" on hearing which words, he recognized the presence of one of the seven. In the Catholic precepts respecting the general forethought and habitual though unconscious preparation for death, by a virtuous and heroic life, those who pass here should recognize the divinely-inspired Church. St. Isidore relates, that by ancient usage the day of coronation of the emperor at Constantinople, at the moment when he appeared in his greatest glory, a stone-mason was to approach and present him with specimens of four kinds of marble, that he might choose one for the construction of his own tomb. If you will believe

the poet, there is a tree in the forest that serves the same purpose.

- " 'Twas in a shady avenue,
 Where lofty elms abound,
 And from a tree
 There came to me
 A sad and solemn sound,—
 That sometimes murmur'd overhead,
 And sometimes underground.
- " In still and silent slumber hush'd
 All nature seem'd to be :
 From heaven above, or earth beneath,
 No whisper came to me—
 Except the solemn sound and sad
 From that mysterious tree.
- " A secret, vague, prophetic gloom,
 As though by certain mark
 I knew the fore-appointed tree,
 Within whose rugged bark
 This warm and living frame shall find
 Its narrow house and dark.
- " This massy trunk that lies along,
 And many more must fall—
 For the very knave
 Who digs the grave,
 The man who spreads the pall,
 And he who tolls the funeral bell,—
 The elm shall have them all ! "

Catholicity, however, employs such images only on one occasion, and that in the case of its supreme pontiff. One may believe that it does not require each of the promiscuous multitude to express every night upon their knees a wish to be dissolved, but undoubtedly it inculcates the necessity of living with a general impression that there is an eternal destination awaiting us ; or, as Mary, queen of Scots, said, in concluding her letter after her condemnation, to Elizabeth, "that from the first days of our capacity to comprehend our duties, we ought to bend our minds to make the things of this world yield to those of eternity." Its disciple is not, perhaps, required to make all his whole life but death's preface, saying, like Sintram to Death, when riding with him in the forest, "I will keep the thought of thee steadily before my soul, thou fearful yet wholesome monitor, thou awful yet loving guide ;" but he is taught the extreme folly and perilous consequences of acting through life as if he and death were never to meet, like those whom even the Gentile ridiculed, τοῦ θανάτου τὸ παράπαν οὐ μνημονεύοντες.

Within the natural forest, the Church, by her funeral bells,

contrives, from time to time, to give salutary warning to all who pass.

"The convent bells are ringing !
 But mournfully and slow,
 In the grey square turret swinging,
 With a deep sound to and fro !
 Heavily to the heart they go !
 Hark ! the hymn is singing !
 The song for the dead below,
 Or the living who shall shortly be so !"

Bells used to be called "exclamatorias voces defunctorum *." "I have often said, preached, and written," says Antonio de Guevara, writing to the Commander Anjulo, "that the sound or clamorous noise of bells is not made so much for the dead as the living ; for if we think a little, it is to teach us that we also are to die ; so that we may truly say they toll not for the dead, but for the living." The Lady Capulet has the same thought, exclaiming,

"O me ! this sight of death is as a bell
 That warns my old age to a sepulchre."

No doubt it enters into the Catholic morality to entertain occasionally such grave thoughts. Life is so uncertain ! so many resemble, in one respect, Cæsar, who, as Cicero says, when slain, expected to live long : "Multos annos regnare meditatus †." Pierre de Pirac, archbishop of Lyons, one day complained of the shortness of life, and said that he could not expect to live more than ten or twelve years more. "He did not live twelve days," says Pierre Mathieu ‡. Madame de Sévigné, on the 26th April, 1695, wrote to M. de Coulanges, saying, "Pour moi que rien n'avertit encore du nombre de mes années, je suis quelque fois surprise de ma santé ; je suis guérie de mille petites incommodités que j'avois autrefois ; non-seulement j'avance doucement comme une tortue, mais je suis prête à croire que je vais comme une écrevisse." In less than a year after writing these words she was dead §. Well might that poet of the thirteenth century demand,

"Dites, avez-vous pleges de vivre longuement ?
 Je voi aucun riche home faire maisonnement
 Quant il a assouvi trestout entièrement
 Se li fait-on I. autre de petit coustement.
 Et vos à quoi penceiz qui n'avez nul demain,
 Et qui à nul bien faire ne voleiz metre main,
 Si hom va au moustier vos dites, je remain."

* La Tradition de l'Eglise sur les Bénédictiones.

† Phil. ii.

‡ Hist. de Hen. IV. liv. ii.

§ Lett. 1038.

So poor a thing is life, that we cannot promise a minute's certainty : in the height and strength of youth, falling to dust again ! Catholicism, therefore, without prescribing any irrational and morbid devotion to the one idea of death, tends to inspire men with a proper, practical, and, we may add, manly sense of this uncertainty, and moves them to speak and write like Dante in his *Convito*, saying, " As Cicero, in his treatise on old age, compares natural death to a port and haven receiving us after a long voyage, so should we regard it ; and even as the good mariner, when he draws near the harbour's mouth, lowers his mainsheet, and enters it softly with a weak and inoffensive motion, so ought we to lower the sails of our worldly operations, and return to God with all our understanding and heart, to the end that we may reach this haven with all quietness and with all peace*." St. Boniface took with him on his journey the treatise of St. Ambrose on the utility and advantages of death, which copy, stained with his blood, was long preserved in the abbey of Fulda†. Persons in the world even sometimes have been known to adopt a more forcible monitor, as when the Emperor Charles V. caused a solemn mass for his own soul to be celebrated before him, and the Archduchess Mary of Austria, for many years before her death, kept in a coffin the shroud in which she was to be buried, carrying it with her on all her journeys‡. Of course such measures are to be ascribed to individual character rather than to the prescript of religion, which must not be loaded with what every one may wish to lay upon it, and which requires nothing that has an air of exaggeration or eccentricity ; but the general principle which led to reminiscences of this kind is wound up with it ; and after all, even the gay and light-hearted need not for this reason accuse it of any singular or gratuitous interference with the pleasures of life ; for the sentiment is commended by genius in all ages, as in the lines of the poet most noted for his tenderness and songs of love, who, recommending a wise usage of the day, concludes saying,

"Extremumque tibi semper adesse putes §."

It is not, however, alone by timely admonitions that Catholicity prepares men for obtaining the happy views of death which are enjoyed upon this road under its guidance. It is on a good, or at least a generous and humble life, that it reckons, recommending as much love of virtue as is possible, and observing that, as

* Dante, *Convito*.

† Brouverus, *Fuldens. Antiq.*

‡ Drexel, *Rosæ Select. Virtut.*, P. i. c. 12.

§ Tibullus.

St. John Climachus says, "obedience is an emancipation from the fear of death;" and that, as Salvius says, "*Felix est qui ea agere potest in seculo, ut gloriam Dei cernere mereatur in cœlo.*" Catholicism, as every one should know, teaches men to be poor in spirit; and death being the robber par excellence, as the French say, those who become thus poor may verify the poet's line,—

"Cantabit vacuus coram Latrone viator."

It teaches to live without injuring others, honest, and noble; and as Pedro Messie of Seville says, "Death is not a misfortune unless when it finds men in a wrong state." It teaches to live according to the ancient Christian notions of goodness and honour, which are popular to this day; and we have already seen that, as St. Gregory says, "*Ostensa nobis est de contemptu mortis via quam sequamur.*" It teaches to sow, as it were, generosity, innocence, sweetness of manner, respect, and piety, in view to what may be gathered at the end, according to the sacred text, "*Et ros morabitur in messione mea;*" on which St. Anthony of Padua says, "The harvest is the season of death to the just, or of their migration hence, and then the dew remains with them; that is, the felicity of the eternal vision associates their soul with the happiness of that dew*." Caxton's *Art and Craft to Know well to Die* begins thus: "When it is so, that, what a man maketh or doeth it is made to come to some end, and if the thing be good and well made, it must needs come to good end; then by better and greater reason, every man ought to intend in such wise to live in this world that he may come to a good end. And then out of this world, full of wretchedness and tribulations, he may go to heaven unto God and his saints, unto joy perdurable." We cannot avoid, then, pausing a moment here to mark the contrast in regard to the manner of viewing death between those who systematically, uninterruptedly reject, and those who embrace, or at intervals embrace, or wish to embrace, that moral discipline which has its centre, as we observed on former roads, in the Catholic religion.

"However astonishing," says Sir William Hamilton, "it is now proved, beyond all rational doubt, that in certain abnormal states, perceptions are possible through other than the ordinary channels of the senses." It seems admitted by all physiologists, that extraordinary faculties are sometimes exhibited in dying. When we die, the mask of this earthly body falls away, and the truth shows nakedly. "There is no more disguise," adds a

* Dom. xiv. post Trinitat.

popular writer ; " we appear as we are." But let us proceed to view these contrasts. In the first place, without the influence of central principles, the natural bitter apprehensions of death, when only black despair whispers its approach, seem to be felt in all their force. Then are men cowards in regard to it, and when its image is not banished, sparing of their little souls, as the good are of their great ones prodigal. Then can observers say with Henry IV.,

" Ah ! what a sign it is of evil life,
When death's approach is seen so terrible !"

To banish the thought of it is found a poor remedy :

Ἄ δαίλ', οὐδέ τί τοι θάνατος καταθύμιός ἐστιν,
ὅς δὴ τοι σχεδόν ἐστι.

The next scene represents him who has tried that supposed specific only the more wretched :

πύρμον γούωσα, λιποῦς' ἀδροτήτα καὶ ἥβην*.

" Lives dissolute, not fearing death, will prove deaths desperate, not hoping for life."

" ——— O the cursed devil !
Which doth present us with all other sins
Thrice candied o'er,—despair, with gall and stibium,
Yet we carouse it off."

" How miserably," says Cæsar of Hiesterbach, " how horribly die usurers, misers, deceivers, proud men, robbers, murderers, litigious men, slaves of luxury, and others as vicious, I will show you by examples †." It is not, we may premise, that all poor sinners die so. What end should we ourselves then, comrade, have to dread ! But these observers take note of men who had no intermission of their sins, all whose life was a continued ill, whose thought was blackness, and nature but disease. Alas ! well might this old author be moved at these contrasts to what he had before shown ; for, as the poet says, addressing a worshipper of money who was a man of law,

" The monk he hath a joyful end,
And well may welcome death like a friend,
When the crucifix close to his heart is prest,
And he piously crosses his arms on his breast,
And the brethren stand round him and sing him to rest,

And tell him, as sure he believes, that anon
 Receiving his crown, he shall sit on his throne,
 And sing in the choir of the blest.
 But a hopeless sorrow it strikes to the heart,
 To think how men like thee depart—
 Unloved and joyless was thy life,
 Unlamented was thine end;
 And neither in this world or the next
 Hadst thou a single friend."

These are the occasions when that fearful word "too late" is uttered with an accent and a look that freeze the blood of all present; then one hears replies like those of Philargus,

"——— Pray you give me leave
 To die as I have lived. I must not part with
 My gold; it is my life; I am past cure."

There was a certain castle in the south of France called *Castrum Malæmortis*, the Castle of Baddeath*. To have merited the name it must have heard sad words of mysterious horror from desperate mortality. Poets have noted some of them, as those of Alphonso—

"Give me more air, air, more air! blow, blow!
 Open, thou Eastern gate, and blow upon me!
 Distil thy cold dews, O thou icy moon,
 And rivers run through my afflicted spirit!
 I am all fire, fire, fire! The raging Dog-star
 Reigns in my blood! Oh, which way shall I turn me?
 Dig, dig, dig, till the springs fly up,
 The cold, cold springs, that I may leap into 'em,
 And bathe my scorch'd limbs in their purling pleasures!
 Or shoot me up into the higher region,
 Where treasures of delicious snow are nourish'd,
 And banquets of sweet hail!"

Or again, they represent before us those grim extorted confessions of a tyrant saying,

"The terrors of a thousand nights made black
 With pitchy tempests, and the moon's defect,
 When she's affrighted with the howlings of
 Crotonean wolves, and groans of dying mandrakes
 Gather'd for charms; the screech-owl's fatal dirge,
 And ghosts disturb'd by furies from their peace,
 Are all within me."

The glass of his sins runs out thus: his time is come to curse, and rave, and die. It is certain, even from what history records, that there might have been many houses called by the same

* Archives des Bouches-du-Rhône, St. Sauveur.

dreadful name from beholding a succession of such spectacles,

“ — Where the ballad of a bad life closes
With sighs and an alas !”

Pierre Mathieu says of Queen Elizabeth, and her grief and last sickness, “ *On disoit que le chagrin venoit de la maladie mesme, et d'autres creurent que la maladie venoit du chagrin**.” Thus did her life finish with infinite sorrow. After remaining many days on cushions spread on the floor, when urged by the lord admiral to go to bed, she angrily refused; and then hinted at phantoms that had troubled her, adding, “ If he were in the habit of seeing such things in his bed as she did when in hers, he would not advise her to go there.” “ It is a fearful task,” says her recent biographer, “ to trace her passage through the dark valley of the shadow of death.”

• ———— Such a fearful end
May teach some men, that bear too lofty crest,
Tho' they live happiest, yet they die not best.”

Mathieu Paris mentions instances: “ The Knight Lambert de Muleton,” he says, “ who had obtained a privilege that he could not be excommunicated unless by an especial mandate from the pope, which was as much as to promise impunity, returning home one day proudly on his horse, felt sick on alighting, and throwing himself on his bed, died before they had time to take off his spurs. Similarly Ranulf the Breton, another king's favourite and extortioner, died suddenly while looking on at a game of dice after dinner. And in like manner Nicholas Damme (‘please God,’ adds the monk, ‘that the name be not significative of what awaited him’), the counsellor of Earl Richard, and another spoliator, fell from his horse during the night, as he returned after an orgie, and expired vomiting the wine with which he was surfeited†.” Again he says, “ This year, 1258, died William Heiron, viscount of Northumberland, the hammerer of the poor, the persecutor of monks, and the most avaricious of men. After experiencing this temporal thirst, there were too many signs at his end that he was only departing to feel thirst of another kind.” But no more of this. *Cæsar of Heisterbach*, the *Magnum Speculum*, and other mediæval works, abound with records of this kind; but what should be remarked with all attention is the fact that in the nineteenth century men of the same character die, we are told, in a manner so precisely similar, that these monastic observers seem to be describing what passes in our own time in London or Paris. Take, for example, the

• Hist. de Hen. IV. liv. vi.

† Ad ann. 1246.

death of Henry Effingstone, the man about town, as described in the Diary of a Late Physician : " Oh, my God ! " exclaims this author, " if men about town could but see this hideous spectacle, surely it would palsy them in the pursuit of ruin, and scare them into the paths of virtue. It is not so much the physical as the mental horrors that are appalling. ' Doctor,' he said, ' what a remarkable, nay, hideous dream I had last night. I thought a fiend came and took me to a gloomy belfry, and muttered these words, " many stripes," in my ear, and the huge bell tolled me into madness, for all the damned danced around me to the sound of it ; ha ! ha ! There's something cursed odd in the coincidence, isn't there ? How it would have frightened some ! ' Then on another day," says this author, " as I was going to sit in the arm-chair by the bedside, ' Don't sit there,' he groaned, ' for a hideous being sat in that chair all night long ; take it away—burn it.' A few days later I thought his mind had changed into something perfectly diabolical. ' Ha ! ' he exclaimed, ' seven's the main ! won't bate a pound of the price of the horse ; look at his forelegs ! The girl, what's become of her ? drowned ? Fire, fire ! see the devils talking about my damnation ! Come, take me off ! And you, George, why are you laddling fire upon me ? I'm flooded with fire ! Now for the dance ! Ha ! and you there ! what, all three of you damned before me ? Let in the snakes ; let the large serpents in ; I love them ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! I won't die ! No, damn you all ! no, damn me ! ' He gasped, and made a noise as if he was choked. We looked : yes, he was gone. The nurse had fainted." The monastic authors, we may infer, had no need to exaggerate. We may believe their accounts. We may depend upon it there is nothing less likely to make us despise Catholicism than the witnessing of the end of one so exactly bad, that if the book of all men's lives lay open to his view, he would meet no sin unpractised by himself. There is no variety even in the phenomenon. Age after age it is always the same spectacle ; it is the dreadful sight of one who, as the poet says,

" Fainting, despairs ; despairing, yields his breath."

These things are full of horror, full of pity. It is a good moral, though made plain by history.

Turning, then, from these fearful observations, let us notice those who under the central influence contemplate their departure. Here all is different. With each of these

" Mild was the slow necessity of death ;
The tranquil spirit failed beneath its grasp,
Without a groan, almost without a fear,
Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
And full of wonder, full of hope, as he."

It must be an ineffable consolation to men when they find in death a confirmation of the principles which had been their guide, or at least the object of their veneration in life, and which all through it had made them less than their thoughts, more than themselves. At the moment when the flames reached the Maid of Orleans, she cried, "Oui, mes voix étaient de Dieu, mes voix ne m'ont pas trompée!" "All doubts," says the historian, "ceased then; for she accepted death as the promised deliverance." Twenty years after, the two venerable monks who assisted her made this deposition: "We heard her," said they, "from the midst of the fire, invoking the saints, her archangel; she repeated the Saviour's name. At last, letting fall her head, she uttered with a great cry, 'Jesus!' and expired." Few, without being greatly moved, can ever observe or hear described the death of persons who had in life been centrally or Catholically trained and influenced. "Charles X. showed," says Chateaubriand, "in his last hours, calmness and equanimity. When he heard of the danger that menaced him, he only said, 'Je ne croyois pas que cette maladie tournât si court.'" When Louis XVI. departed for the scaffold, the officer on duty refused to receive his testament, alleging that he had not time, and that he was only bound to conduct him to the spot. The king replied, "C'est juste." "We can understand," adds the historian, "why the Bourbons hold to a religion which renders them so noble in their last moments. This race knows admirably well how to die; to be sure, it has been learning the art for more than 800 years." What a death again was that of the Emperor Charles V. in the convent of St. Yuste! The clock had just struck two in the morning. The emperor interrupted the Chaplain Villalva, who was holding forth in a pious strain. "The time is come," he said; "bring me the candle and the crucifix." The one was a taper from Montserrat, the other a beautiful crucifix which had been taken from the dead hand of his wife at Toledo. Taking one in each hand he silently contemplated the figure of the Saviour, and then pressed it to his bosom. Those who stood nearest heard him say quickly, as if replying to a call, "Ya voy, Señor—Now, Lord, I go." Then, with a voice loud enough to be heard outside the room, he cried, "Ay, Jesus!" and expired. Quixada said that he had died in a manner worthy of the greatest man that ever had lived or ever would live in the world*. Take the example of one whom some would have us suppose to have only believed always in the truth of the Catholic religion, while his conduct was often in contradiction to its spirit. Yet, even on such a supposition, this conformity of will and intention receiving confirmation in the last hours of life, is seen to confer so great a dignity, that the most

* Stirling's Charles V.

envenomed observer is constrained to pause, and silently to admire. Pierre Mathieu describes the death of Philip II., and it furnishes an instance in point. "A short while before his death," says this accurate historian, "he sent for the prince his son, and said that he did not feel either force or capacity to advise him respecting the qualities to render him worthy of ruling, but that he left with his confessor a paper in which he had written down the results of his experience, and the convictions of his conscience; but that he wished him to hear what the holiest and most just king had said with his last breath, viz., the last words of St. Louis to Philippe Augustus" (which, by the way, might have been proposed to Lord Jeffrey, when speaking of Penn he said, "We should like to see any private letter of instructions from a sovereign to his heir-apparent that will bear a comparison with the injunctions of this honest sectary"). "Then, sending for a little ivory coffer he took from it a crucifix, which he gave to the prince, saying that the emperor his father had died holding it in his hand, that he wished also to die so, and that God might give the grace to his son of dying so, and of having in his heart the cross of man's redemption. In the most violent pains he repeated the forty-second psalm, in which David compares the soul desiring the true life to a thirsty stag pursued by hounds and hunters. During the last fifty days of his life he received the communion fourteen times, having made his general confession: and in fact his resolution at his death was so fervent, that his confessor wished him to die of this sickness, in order that such dispositions might incur no risk. During three years of suffering he was prepared to die; and all discourses addressed to him that had not relation to his departure were far from his thoughts. A gentleman observing that he had always some hours of truce from suffering, said to him that if he would change his room to some other of the Escorial, less gloomy and with better air, the physicians thought he might live two years longer. His reply was, 'Give this picture of our Lady to the infant; it belonged to the empress my mother, and I have worn it fifty years.' He spoke of his departure as of a royal entry into one of his cities, and of his burial as of his coronation. 'I wish,' said he, 'to have this crucifix on my breast attached to my neck, and to hold in my hand the other, holding which my mother died. Have a candle of Montserrat reserved, and give it to me when I am in my agony. Go,' said he to two monks, 'and take the measure of my father's coffin, and observe how he is wrapped up, that I may be buried in the same way, and with no more ceremony than the poorest monk of this monastery.' Those who stood near could have used the words of St. Augustin respecting a saint of Spain. His pain was great, but his courage greater; his flesh suffered, but his spirit spoke.

Nothing survived in him but the memory of his sins, which so pressed him that after his knee had been opened, when the prince his son asked him if the wound caused him great pain, 'I feel much more,' replied the king, 'the wounds of my sins.' Being wholly resigned, he repeated a million times, 'Not my will, but thine be done.' He received extreme unction on the 1st of September, about nine in the evening, after inquiring from Garsia de Loaysa, archbishop of Toledo, respecting the order and form of the ceremony; for, said he, 'I have never seen it given.' Changing his first intention, he wished the prince to be present, and after it was over he commanded all to retire but him, as he wished to speak with him alone. It is said that he recommended him above all two things—to remain faithful to the Church, and to render justice to his subjects. He expired gently about five o'clock in the afternoon of Sunday, the 13th of September *." The death of James II., at St. Germain, supplied another example of this patience, tranquillity, and even joy, indicating so clearly a celestial source, whatever men may love to relate respecting the previous character of this unfortunate king. Returning to earlier times, we find Mathieu Paris mentioning a remarkable instance of the same holy manner of departing, after an ordinary life in the world. "William of Salisbury dying in his castle of Salisbury, prayed," he says, "the bishop to come to him to hear his confession. On the bishop entering his room, the count left his bed to meet him, put round his neck a rude cord, prostrated himself on the pavement, and wept, declaring himself a traitor to the King of kings, and in that posture made his confession and received the body of our Lord, persevering many days in his repentance till he expired. Here was his epitaph:—"The flower of earls, the noble William of royal race, is dead. His long sword is henceforth closed in a short scabbard †." To these examples may be added an instance not less illustrative of truth for being drawn from a work of fiction. We have only to read the death of Alonzo Quixano, to observe how closely Cervantes adheres to reality, when describing the effects of Catholicism in rendering the last hours of men calm and dignified. "Gentlemen," said the disenchanted hero to those who were for consoling him by proposing a new and more innocent form of delusion, "let us proceed fair and softly. Look not for this year's birds in last year's nest. I was mad; I am now sober. I was Don Quixote de la Mancha; I am now the good Alonzo Quixano; and may my unfeigned repentance and my sincerity restore me to the esteem you once had for me! and let the notary proceed." "I love not any whom I laugh not at," says one of the characters in Ford's Moral Masque. Judging from

* Hist. de Hen. IV. lib. i.

† Ad ann. 1226.

history alone, the weaknesses that spring from what is amiable in our nature do not seem to annul the advantages conferred by lofty principles, or to prevent Heaven itself from smiling on those at their death who through life may have evinced both. If the material works of such men are found to be nothing in their cold dying grasp, it is not so with the actions of their mind. Their moral and religious thoughts, at least, do not perish, and that appears sufficient to constitute between this manner of departing and every other a notable difference; but when lives have nobly corresponded with these imperishable thoughts, no one can observe the last scene without attaining to a very distinct view of the central character of the religion from which they must have emanated. Claude de Lorraine, duc de Guise, appeared at his death like a holy monk. Resignation, devout prayer, psalmody, forgiveness of his enemies, even if there were any such who had caused his death, solemn reception of the holy viaticum, saying, after returning to his bed, "S'il plaist à Dieu je pars pour aller le rejoindre ainsi que ses saints,"—nothing seemed wanting to form the grandest picture of a hero deriving from heaven assistance at his death*. It seems to have been under the impression of such examples that the old poet produced his exquisite description of the death of Henry II.—

"Quand Henri roy de France
Sentit que la puissance
De la mort le pressoit,
D'une espérance entier
Ceste douce prière
Au ciel il avança :

"O Seigneur amiable,
O Seigneur vénérable,
Malade je me sens,
Et mon ame travaille
Jusqu' à tant qu'elle s'en aille,
Voici l'esprit je rends.

"Je m'en vay à la fosse
Sentant mon amé grosse
D'un extrême souci,
Je m'en vay à la verge
Qui les justes convoie
Prenant congé d'ici.

"Moy qui mort y repose
Sous ceste lame close,
Autrefois si grand Roy,
Adieu je dis au monde,

* René de Bouillé, Hist. des Ducs de Guise, tom. i. 214.

Au monde tant immonde
Pour m'envoler à toy.

“Donc mon Dieu je te prie,
Auquel seul je me fie,
Je te prie, Seigneur,
Que ta pitié si tendre
Sur moy vucilles estendre
Ta grace et ta faveur.

“Par ta bénéficeence
O mon Dieu, ma défense
Fay qu'en changeant le bien,
Le bien de ceste vie,
Dont je n'ay plus d'envie
Puisse jouir du tien.”

The Count de Maistre, describing the death of young Eugene de Costa, who was mortally wounded in an engagement with the French in Italy, supplies an instance of this happy death in youth. “Eugene,” says he, “in his last hours heard read the acts of the martyrs under Decius and Diocletian. He felt animated, exalted, enchanted by that intrepid piety; for whatever bore the character of heroism made his generous heart beat to its last hour. He saw the final moment approach without fear; his tender piety, his pure conscience, his lively faith constantly sustained him. He doubted not but that on departing from this life he was to fly away to the abode of eternal felicity. He wished to all who surrounded him the happiness that he was going to enjoy. He prayed for his relations, named them all, and pitied only them*.” In general the outlines alone of such scenes can be but faintly sketched: “nought but an angel’s pencil, dipped in the infinite conceptions of Heaven, can add the glowing tint and complete the loveliness of the picture.” But such outlines are invaluable. We all must die; and these have taught us how.

But again, the central principles which are united in Catholicism are found to sweeten the approach of death by a partial restoration of man’s nature to a state of harmony that may be called original, so far as being after the accident of death’s introduction a state in accordance with the Creator’s will. Asgill, from his study of the Scriptures, was convinced that death was not a necessity, and that men might pass to the next world without enduring it: he wrote a book to prove this proposition, and he says that “the Bible now contains two famous records of the resurrection that never came to Paul’s hands,” and so he argued against the necessity of dying. With such madness, it is to be hoped, we have nothing to do; but we may take note of that

* *Lettres*, tom. ii. Discours à la Marquise de Costa.

weak fancy that from every object draws arguments for fearing death, causing men to dread their own shadows ; and even when knowing them to be such, still to discourse and act as if they thought that they may come leering after them to steal away the substance. It is a fact which few men of reflection will be disposed to question, that, heavy as are the evils incident to us all by nature, those of the imagination which come to us from what may be termed the sphere of the unnatural are the greatest and the most difficult to endure ; and it is no less true that many persons, as if not content with the former, seem to take a strange and unaccountable pleasure in seeking to multiply and aggravate the latter. Terror of an ill is sometimes greater in the expectation than the ill itself. Death, for instance, though it had been originally foreign to nature, is nevertheless as it occurs to it no doubt a very different thing from that monster which weak men have fancied, and which the imagination misdirected, and even the understanding wrongly biased by views mistaken perhaps for those of religion, represent it to be. "Do not make death horrid to me," says Manuel in the Court Secret. Painters as well as preachers are sometimes to blame in this respect. Those spectral riders on white horses ; those ghastly skeletons with scythe and hour-glass ; those reapers whose name is death ; those dances of death which even poetry has accepted, are not among the best models which we have inherited from the middle ages. When one hears certain orators, too, declaiming upon death, eloquent, if you will, in their way, there is occasion to wish that they would not transform into a hideous and terrific thing of itself that which used to be represented as a beautiful youth leaning on an inverted torch in the attitude of repose, his wings folded and his feet crossed ; or as a butterfly escaped from its chrysalis, to signify the soul freed from the body, and fluttering in the fresh air of heaven. Certainly it is curious, as Hazlitt observes, that we who boast so much of our knowledge of the immortality of the soul, and of the glad hopes of an after-life, should take such pains to make the image of death melancholy, while Gentiles should do the reverse, and associate it with emblems that ought to belong rather to us. One might suppose that there would be no harm in trying to divest death of all needless unpleasant associations, and adding to it all the pleasant ones which it will allow. But the contrary is what we do, for we seem to spare no pains to add to its repulsive horrors ; and in this respect it is not alone some of the philosophers, as Lord Bacon complains, but it is to be feared many pious persons, who are guilty ; for there are men, though indeed not great artists, resembling in one respect Leonardo da Vinci, who laboured constantly, not

content with his darkest shadows, to discover the ground tone of others still darker, seeking a black that should produce a deeper shadow, and be yet darker than all other known blacks, until he finally produced that totally dark shade, in which there is absolutely no light left. In the same manner, by dint of prescribing lugubrious formulas, and various modes of preserving men against the fear of death, there is a gloomy and horrible ground tone produced respecting it in many minds, such as perhaps neither nature nor Catholicism free from the mixture of mere human suggestions would require or sanction. It is related of Malherbe, that but an hour before his death, a certain priest speaking to him of the felicity of the life beyond the grave, and expressing himself in vulgar language, he interrupted him, exclaiming, "Say no more of it; your style will disgust me with it." Had the same rhetorician touched on the menacing side of the subject, perhaps the utility resulting to the hearer would not have been different; and after all, though no doubt the thought might with less chance of offending the serious be otherwise expressed, there seems to be much justice in the remonstrance that occurred lately in a London popular publication, which demanded—

"Why should the preacher ever rave
Of sorrow, death, and 'dust to dust?'
We know that we shall fill a grave;
But why be sad before we must?"

"The world," says an English author, "is most unquestionably happier upon the whole than otherwise; or light, and air, and the face of nature would be different from what they are. By cultivating agreeable thoughts, then, we tend, like bodies in philosophy, to the greater mass of sensations rather than to the less."

"For other things mild Heav'n a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains."

Sound sense, which never is at variance with any truth, will avoid conjuring up adventitious terrors, or adding gravity to what is already grave enough; for as Irene says in the *Lost Lady*,—

"Why should you labour your disquiet?—
Anticipating thus your knowledge, you will make
Your future sufferings present; and so call
Lasting griefs upon you, which your hopes
Might dissipate, till Heaven had made your mind
Strong enough to encounter them."

Mortality, one may think, needs not tributes day after day to enhance her dread and her forebodings ; as it is,

“ She wears a coronal of flowers faded
Upon her forehead, and a face of care ;
There is enough of wither'd every where
To make her bower, and enough of gloom.”

There is enough of death in the world without our calling in the aid of things that nature seems intended should be kept out of sight, to increase by artificial means the sense of its presence. Without this raking into its bowels, the earth doth bear quite enough of bitter fruits, enough of chilly droppings, enough of fear and shadowy grief, to keep the soul within the bounds that nature wishes. Some very grave persons seem in fact to enter their protest against the Author of nature for presenting us with agreeable images of life, rather than with a ceaseless spectacle of dissolution. They seem eager, like Lucian, to represent all men as fearing death alike, saying that however, like Socrates, the man may seem bold and manly when death is far from him, no sooner does he draw near its mouth and see Cerberus, but he cries like an infant, and proves that his courage was all acted — *καὶ οὐκ ἀληθῶς κατεφρόνει τοῦ πράγματος*. Painting thus over and over an image to terrify our nature, they seem, at least to others, as far as regards present happiness, to experience the fate of that Fivizzano, who died from too fixedly regarding his own painting of Death, on whom the following epigram was composed :

“ *Me veram pictor divinus mente recepit.
Admota est operi deinde perita manus.
Dumque opere in facto defigit lumina pictor,
Intentus nimium, palluit et moritur.
Viva igitur sum mors, non mortua mortis imago
Si fungor, quo mors fungitur officio.*”

When men are for keeping every thing beautiful and cheerful in the background, and for bringing forward what is loathsome, and evidently designed by the Creator for concealment, it might be well to remind them, that however nervously they may feel drawn towards fearful images, it is one result of central principles to bring us all back to unperverted nature, and to ward off the delusions, whatever be their source or form, which interpose between it and human thoughts.

In the first place, Catholicism, besides supplying argumentative proof from sources peculiarly its own, restores to man in all its freshness that certain instinct or natural sense of immortality which belongs to him in every age of the world, and which only a kind of perverse civilization, opposed to revelation as well as to

the progress of human happiness, can obscure. When this sense is revived and confirmed, death certainly assumes, as we have lately seen, a different character. What is there in deaths like those we have lately observed to make us look forward with anguish, or to plunge into all sorts of gloominess and bad taste? And besides, as all great changes affect the mind with apprehension, the wisdom of having one's thoughts continually and practically centred upon what awaits us, even under this change of aspect, seems very questionable. We see how the sense of immortality operated with the Gentile philosophers, whose example so far assuredly need not be fled from. With what simplicity and ease does Socrates allude to his own approaching death, saying, "It seems I am to leave to-day, since the Athenians order it;" and then adding, "Ah, my dear Simmias! be assured that one who loves wisdom will hasten with great pleasure to that place where alone he can enjoy what he loves. Whenever you see a man sorry to die, it is a sure mark that he is a man who does not love wisdom, but the body; and whoever so loves the body, loves honours or vices, or riches and honours both. Therefore what is called valour belongs essentially to lovers of wisdom*." "A life which can be lost is not a happy life," says Cicero, and man feels that he was created for happiness. These symptoms of leaving, then, the perishable life are not so formidable.

"Methinks they show like to those eastern streaks
That warn us hence before the morning breaks."

Nature and experience teach, with the primitive Indian traditions, that nothing is lost in nature; that whatever dies returns under a different form. "All things," says Krishna, "that have a beginning are subject to death; and things subject to death experience regeneration." "The secret of heaven indeed," as a living author says, "is kept from age to age. No angel has ever hinted to human ears the scenery and circumstances of the newly-parted soul. But it is certain," as he adds, "that it must tally with what is best in nature. It must not be inferior in tone to the already known works of the Artist who sculptures the globes of the firmament and writes the moral law. It must be fresher than rainbows, stabler than mountains, agreeing with flowers, with tides, and the rising and setting of autumnal stars." So the poet, animated with such hopes, exclaims—

"Qu'importe que la vie, inégale ici-bas
Pour l'homme et pour la femme
Se dérobe et soit prête à rompre sous vos pas?
N'avez vous pas votre âme?"

Votre âme qui bientôt fuira peut-être ailleurs
 Vers les régions pures,
 Et vous emportera plus loin que nos douleurs
 Plus loin que nos murmures !
 Soyez comme l'oiseau posé pour un instant
 Sur des rameaux trop frêles,
 Qui sent ployer la branche et qui chante pourtant
 Sachant qu'il a des aîsles."

Besides, without reverting to the ancient fable that represents Chiron preferring death to immortality, finding the latter intolerable through satiety, are we to suppose that no one can naturally be conducted to such thoughts respecting death as Rupertus expresses, where he says that "God made man mortal and short-lived through mercy, and as it is written, 'præcavens in futurum;' for if the famous men of old," continues the abbot, "from living so much longer than men at present, were inflated with such pride, what would they have done if they had known that they were to live for ever? Therefore God provided mercifully for our salvation and future victory by ordaining this short life for us, since otherwise, no less in man than in demons, would the evil of pride be incorrigible, with the addition besides to them of the corruption and misery of the flesh, which the demons being not carnal want*." 'Ecce Adam quasi unus ex nobis factus est, sciens bonum et malum. Nunc ergo videte, ne forte mittat manum suam et sumat de ligno vitæ et vivat in æternum.' These words," continues Rupertus, "seem to sound like anger and vengeance; but if rightly considered, they are words of paternal providence and a certain preparation of mercy for us, already flying round from afar. For to man already vitiated what would be eternal life but eternal misery? 'Quid enim esset jam vitiato homini vita æterna nisi æterna miseria?' Which truth Plotinus, the Gentile philosopher, as St. Augustin remarks, is praised for having rightly understood; for, speaking of human minds, he says, 'The merciful Father made their bonds mortal,' so that the fact of men being mortal in body, as says St. Augustin, he thought was to be ascribed to the mercy of God, thus providing lest they should be for ever retained in the misery of this life. In effect it is in this respect that they differ from the demons; for as blessed eternity or eternal beatitude belongs to God, a miserable eternity or eternal misery to the demons, so man, whose mortality is miserable or misery mortal, fell indeed from the beatitude of God, but did not descend down to the misery of demons, the mercy of God preventing him, and saying, 'Videte

ne sumat de ligno vitæ et vivat in æternum*.” So natural is this thought of the mystic theologian, that it occurs in a work of popular literature at the present day. “The world,” says our contemporary, “would be insane and rabid if these disorganizations should last for hundreds of years. It is kept in check by death and infancy. Infancy comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to Paradise. Death puts a limit to ambition and to vices.” The same idea is expressed in the old play of the Double Marriage:—

“When we are little children,
And cry and fret for every toy comes cross us,
How sweetly do we show when sleep steals on us !
When we grow great, but our affection greater,
And struggle with this stubborn twin, born with us,
And tug and pull, yet still we find a giant :
Had we not then the privilege to sleep
Our everlasting sleep, he would make us idiots.”

Thus readily does the idea of death being a thing to do us good suggest itself to the thoughtful mind restored to a natural sense of things by Catholicism, and brought to take that view by simple reflection after the experience which in general an active life supposes.

“Times have their changes ; sorrow makes men wise ;
The sun itself must set as well as rise.
Then why not we ?”

Nature and the central wisdom, as if hand in hand, invite the weary traveller to the repose of death,—

“And point his wishes to that tranquil shore,
Where the pale spectre Care pursues no more.”

“Die with joy,” St. Francis used to say. “Leave the body with the same spirit as if when at sea you would jump from a crazy, unsafe vessel upon the land.” But death is terrible ! you reply, still distrustful and unconvinced. Well ! hear the poet’s rejoinder. It is so much the more noble. Mark how he continues the dialogue, proceeding thus—

“’Tis full of fearful shadows ! So is sleep, sir,
Or any thing that’s merely ours, and mortal ;
We were begotten gods else. But those fears,
Feeling but once the fires of nobler thoughts,
Fly, like the shapes of clouds we form, to nothing.
But then suppose it endless parting
With all we can call ours, with all our sweetness,
With youth, strength, pleasure, people, time, nay reason !

For in the silent grave no conversation,
No joyful tread of friends, no voice of lovers,
No careful father's counsel, nothing's heard,
Nor nothing is, but all oblivion,
Dust, and an endless darkness : and dare you
Desire this place ?

Even granting this, which is what we cannot do,

'Tis of all sleeps the sweetest :
Children begin it to us, strong men seek it,
And kings from height of all their painted glories
Fall, like spent exhalations, to this centre,
And those are fools that fear it."

Nor should we exclude from these considerations the thought, springing from the same combined sources of nature and grace, that even the passage itself which constitutes death can be rendered easy and harmonious. Carneades used to say of death, that nature would easily dissolve what it had united ; and it was the saying of Bion that the road from this world to Hades is easy, since one descends into it with eyes shut. Hence St. Augustin, judging at least for himself, would be at no great pains to protract his life by means of art. "What folly in men," he exclaims, "to give their bodies to be tormented by surgeons ! nunquid ut non moriantur, sed ut aliquanto serius moriantur ? for a few uncertain days to be added they wish to suffer much certain misery, often dying under their operations ; so that, through unwillingness to die lest they should suffer pain, they frequently both suffer pain and die *." The departure often takes place so as even to nature's eye to strip death of all horror. Some die at an open window gazing on the setting sun. Lucas of Leyden caused himself to be carried into the open air, to behold the sky as he expired ; others protract delicious moments to within a few days of their end. The Emperor Charles V. was seated in his open gallery enjoying the sunshine. "He had sent for a portrait of the empress, and hung for some time lost in thought over the gentle face which, with its blue eyes, auburn hair, and pensive beauty, somewhat resembled the noble countenance of that other Isabella, the great queen of Castille. He next called for a picture of our Lord praying in the garden, and then for a sketch of the Last Judgment by Titian. Having looked his last upon the image of the wife of his youth, it seemed as if he were now bidding farewell in the contemplation of these other favourite pictures to the noble art which he had loved with a love that cares, and years, and sickness could not quench. Thus occupied, he remained so long abstracted and motionless

that Mathys, who was on the watch, thought it right to awake him from his reverie. On being spoken to, he turned round and said that he was ill. The doctor felt his pulse, and pronounced him in a fever. The afternoon sun was shining over the great walnut-tree full into the gallery. From this pleasant spot, filled with the fragrance of the garden, and the murmur of the fountain, and bright with glimpses of the golden Vera, they carried him to the bed, at the head of which hung a beautiful picture of our Blessed Lady, and there, so lately at least enjoying the delights of nature and art, did he expire *." Vasari mentions more than one great painter who expressed in dying a playful criticism upon some work of art that was presented to him for a religious purpose. The words of Louis XIV. to Madame de Maintenon argued the same facility. "I thought," he said to her, "that it was more difficult to die." Petrarch, who, as Hazlitt says, seemed born to complete and render glorious the idea of an author from first to last, was found dead in his study, with his head placidly resting on a book. "O ignaros malorum," says Seneca, "quibus non mors ut optimum nature inventum laudatur!" What is death in the eyes of many men but a summer's dawn, the harbinger of joy? They seem to cry from their sick chamber at its approach, like the young wooer,

"——— See, love! what streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder East!
Night's candles are burnt out,—and jocund Day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops!"

Nature can desire death, as in the instance of Philaster, saying,

"I have so long expected this glad hour
That, Heaven knows, it is a joy to die;
I find a recreation in't."

Cæsar was tired of the world and of living for himself, and Cicero says, "It has been told me that you are often heard saying, 'Satis te tibi vixisse †.'" Cicero himself was tired of this life, and he said, "Mihî fere satis est quod vixi, vel ad ætatem, vel ad gloriam ‡." How many persons at this moment resemble him as he paints himself on that occasion when he landed at Circæum, where he spent the night, and deliberated long about what was the best course for him to adopt! and in the end we read, "omnia displicuisse præter mortem." The oracle told Hercules that in a certain spot and at a certain time he should find repose and prosperity. "Here," he says, "it was that I had hoped from the oracular voice, which said that I should rest from my labours,"

* Stirling.

† Pro Marcello.

‡ Phil. i.

—— κάδοκουν πράξιιν καλῶς
Τὸ δ' ἦν ἄρ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο, πλὴν θανεῖν ἐμέ.

" 'Tis well, 'tis well ——

O comrade! in the turmoil of our lives,
Men are like politic states, or troubled seas,
Toss'd up and down with several storms and tempests,
Change and variety of wrecks and fortunes,
Till, labouring to the havens of our homes,
We struggle for the calm that crowns our ends."

Poets, indeed, might sometimes in this respect shame more formal guides; for those who address the imagination and the heart love to dwell on the smiling, consoling view of death, as in the lines,

"Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill."

Or in these,

"——— Be cured
By the sure physician, death, who is the key
To unbar these locks."

Death to many seems really like a desired journey, an enviable change, as Mortimer, alluding to his own dissolution, says, addressing Richard Plantagenet,

"But now thy uncle is removing hence,
As princes do their courts, when they are cloy'd
With long continuance in a settled place."

εὐδαίμων μὲν ὃς ἐκ θαλάσσης
ἔφυγε κύμα λιμένα δ' ἔκχευ.

Such is the image of death employed by the Greek tragedian, whom the natural philosopher seems to follow when he says that "life is so constituted that to die is for many persons the best refuge *." By another poet life is compared to a chace, in which those who only escape from it by death have been hunted:

"O world! thou wast the forest to this hart."

Even the circumstances of death seem by a central or Catholic appreciation of the change involved to lose all that character of severe and lugubrious formality with which they are often supposed to be inseparably attended; and therefore the poet says,

"—— Thou tell'st the world
It is not worth leave-taking."

After returning from Italy, Chateaubriand, impressed with the memory of its clear and beautiful skies, and describing the dif-

ferent kind of view which he had from his window in Paris, says, alluding to his approaching end, "I looked at the pale sun, and said to it, I shall soon find you again elsewhere, wearing a better face, and we shall separate no more." Thus did he verify what is said in the old play,

"——— If death want company,
There's many thousands, boy, whose aged years
Have taken a surfeit of earth's vanities;
They will go with him when he please to call."

For them death is like the prospect of passing from some cold, naked region of the north to a land of bright shores under Ausonian skies,

"Where eternal summer dwells, and
West winds, with musky wing, about
The cedar'd alleys fling nard
And Cassia's balmy smells."

So Manges, the hermit, dying, said to Renaud de Montauban, who mourned for him, "To mourn an old man is going against the will of nature. Do you not perceive with what wisdom she conducts us to the end of life? She weakens us little by little; she adds successively infirmity to infirmity, so as to lessen gradually the fondness we all have for life *."

"O thou soft natural death, that art joint-twin
To sweetest slumber!—no rough-bearded comet
Stares on thy mild departure; the dull owl
Beats not against thy casement."

St. Monica, before her death, said, "What have I to do here any longer? Quid hic facio?" The venerable Abbé Du Bois used to say to those who came to visit him at the house of the Missions Etrangères, "I am really ashamed to be found here still. It seems," he would add, "as if I could never leave this place, which could be so much better occupied. I am ashamed at my age to be still here." "You are not, I hope, unresigned to die," said a young and timid priest to an aged confessor, to whom he was about administering the last sacraments. A smile and "Oh, par exemple!" was the reply. Some have realized the poet's wishes, avoiding even to give pain to others in their last moments, saying,

"But silent let me sink to earth,
With no officious mourners near;
I would not mar one hour of mirth,
Nor startle friendship with a tear."

The late bishop of Nancy, from whose lips the last anecdote was gathered, feeling himself suddenly dying as he sat at his desk writing, seized the hand of his nephew, the young Count de Forbin Janson, and, as if heedless of himself, only said, "Do not be frightened; it is nothing but another voyage." The stranger knew him well, and had often heard him relate his rapid journeys on errands of charity or of heroic fidelity, and his hairbreadth escapes. A month before he had spoken with smiles of his conviction that he was near his end.

"—— One then left this earth
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
Which clothed him in the radiance undefiled
Of its departing glory."

But, perhaps, notwithstanding examples taken thus from the very heart of Catholicity, though in part agreeing with what is found in Gentile books, some one will ask how can such views be reconciled with Catholicism, or with the ecclesiastical solemnity with which it surrounds death? Oh, how greatly do men who ask such questions mistake the aim of its address to our poor humanity preparing for its change! for it may be believed that Catholicism seeks to frighten no one by putting on an antic majesty incompatible with love; it seems to say to the dying,

"—— I come not to disturb
Th' harmonious calm your soul enjoys : may pleasure
Live there enthron'd, till you yourself shall woo
Death to enlarge it! May felicities,
Great as th' ideas of philosophy,
Wait still on your delight! May death impart
All that you have envied!"

But witness examples, if you doubt such representations of its spirit. A friend once speaking to Michel Agnolo Buonaroti of death, remarked "that his devotion to art must needs make him think of it with great regret." "By no means," replied Michel Agnolo; "for if life be a pleasure, yet, since death also is sent by the hand of the same Master, neither should that displease us." "Tell me the truth," said St. Francis to the physician; "what think you of my sickness? Do not fear—quoniam per gratiam Dei non sum corculus, that I should fear death. It is all one to me, life or death, so united in will am I to God. Beneveniat soror mea mors. Let Brother Angelo and Brother Leo come to me, that they may sing something about my sister, death—*Lodato se mio Signore per nostra sora morte corporale*;" or, as it is given elsewhere, "*Lauderis, mi Domine, propter sororem nostram mortem, quam nullus vivens potest evadere.*" A devout Protestant philosopher is represented as lamenting on his death-bed that in health he should have given twelve or fourteen hours

each day to common pursuits, and but one to his Maker*. A Catholic mind would have taken a different view of human obligations, and would, under such circumstances, have been delivered at least from this cause of regret and apprehension. Vincent Caraffa, general of the Jesuits, taking recreation as usual after dinner, was asked what he would do if he knew that he was immediately to die. "I would do exactly what I am now doing," he replied; "that is, I would unbend my mind with recreation†." Roderic de Hormazas being admonished, as we are told, by his guardian angel, that he was to die on the following day, after his usual morning devotions, spent the whole remainder of the day in the kitchen, discharging his office as cook, and then in the evening demanded to be anointed, which rite was no sooner administered than he expired‡. The dying discourse of John de Medeis to his children evinced the same view of the facility of dying. "My dear sons," he said to them, "neither I nor any other born into this world ought with sorrow to leave worldly solicitudes to pass to eternal rest. I perceive that I approach the last days of my life, and in that which causes sadness to the effeminate and to cowards, I find the greatest comfort; for it is by a disposition of nature that I arrive at the end of my course, and I consider how joyfully I set out on the passage from mortal to immortal life. Only pray God that I arrive at the salvation of my soul." We have the same results on the death of Cornaro, of which Antonio Graziani, bishop of Amelia, was an eyewitness. "The excellent old man," he says, "feeling his death near, did not regard the great passage with any alarm, but as if it were only passing from one house to another. Seated on his little narrow bed, he told me with a clear, sonorous voice, the motives which made him quit life with such a firm soul; he made vows for the happiness of my Commendone, the Venetian cardinal, to whom he wished to write with his own hand a letter of advice and consolation, saying that he thought he might live two days longer; but soon after growing much weaker, he again asked for the succours of religion, and holding in his hands, with fixed grasp, a little crucifix, he exclaimed, looking at it stedfastly, 'Joyous and full of hope I shall go with thee, my good God.' Then closing his eyes, as if to sleep, he left us with a faint sigh." Thus, by taking a few examples, this question, I think, may be said to be practically answered. Catholicism makes it easy to die. As St. Thomas of Villanova says, "*Non solum horribilis non est mors, sed placida etiam amabilis vigilantia*§." The Cid even seems to transfer to the act of dying the idea of a common

* Diary of a Late Physician. † Bartolus, in ejus vita.

‡ Siguenza, in Hist. Hieronymianorum.

§ De S. Ellephonso, Sermon. ii.

feudal duty, saying in his testament, "As for my soul, He who created it has full right to have it." Thus die persons under the central influence. They have so much joy and peace about them, it were a sin to wish their life beyond that minute.

"—— As doves

By fond desire invited, on wide wings
And firm, to their sweet nest returning home
Cleave the air, wafted by their will along,
So do they pass away."

The sweet death of Brother Bernard, the Franciscan, was so gracious, that actually his countenance appeared more beautiful after it took place than when he was alive*; and the same observation is repeatedly made. With respect to the forms in which the positive assistance of religion is yielded to the dying, one must distinguish what we are told is the intention of the Church and her rite itself, from the ideas sometimes associated with popular language respecting them. Confession, in the first place, is a relief, not a burden to nature, which, in the case of crime, as the poet who sung Eugene Aram shows, can often extort it. Ulysses tells lies till the very last, so that even on arriving in Ithaca he invents what the boys of London would call a stunning falsehood to deceive the stranger who accosted him; when Minerva replies to him as follows:

Κερδαλέος κ' εἶη καὶ ἐπικόπος, ὅς σε παρέλθοι
'Εν πάντεσσι δόλοισι, καὶ εἰ θεὸς ἀντιάσει.
Σχέτλιε, ποικιλομήτα, δόλων ἄτ', οὐκ ἄρ' ἔμελλες,
Οὐδ' ἐν σῇ περ ἰὼν γαίῃ, λήξειν ἀπατάων,
Μύθων τε κλοπίων, οἳ τοι πεδῶθεν φίλοι εἰσὶν †.

The Homeric hero, however, in this respect is not a fair representative of man. Nature is attracted, not repulsed, by the Catholic discipline at death. "Look up," says the Church's holy messenger; "I am come to help, not to afflict thee; I share thy sufferings. Why not acknowledge thy mistake?"

"—— Though content be call'd

The soul of action, and licentious man
Propounds it as the reason of his life;
Yet, if intemperate appetite pursue it,
The pure end's lost, and ruin must attend it.
But I would comfort thee. Do but express
A detestation of thy former follies,
We shall be reunited, and enjoy
Eternal pleasures ——
Hope then with sorrow, greatest hopes are small
When that alone may make amends for all."

"To slip often," says the old poet, who knew well the spirit of Catholicism, "is incident to our nature, and excused by human frailty; but to fall ever, damnable." Life may be restored to all who have the will.

"—— While we run
A constant race in goodness, it retains
The just proportion. But the journey being
Tedious, and strong temptations in the way,
That may in some degree divert us from
The road that we put forth in, ere we end
Our pilgrimage, it may, like leaves, turn yellow,
Or be with blackness clouded. But when we
Find we have gone astray, and labour to
Return to our never-failing guide,
Faith, and contrition with unfeign'd tears,
The spots of vice wash'd off, will soon restore it
To the first pureness."

What is there in confession, then, described thus as it is by our ancient dramatic poets, to wound or to discourage? It is, besides, in general a manly voice that meets your ear in those sacred tribunals, not the prosy tediousness of an old woman. Again, to anoint the sick with oil, hoping and praying that their body even may be cured as well as their soul, has nothing surely in itself that "the gorge rises at," or to alarm and sadden any one. We read in the book entitled *Gemma Prædicantium* of a vision which declared that extreme unction, instead of determining, is often instrumental in guarding off death, and restoring the health of those who receive it. Certainly, setting all such assurances aside, it would be hard to show that meeting death sacramentally armed with a sentiment of being prepared to live or die, sequestered from a sense of human sins, and with a foretaste of those divine ideas which change the spirit by a heaven of bliss, must necessarily be more alarming than that mode of departing which is seen elsewhere, "with not one tinge of sanctuary splendour," not a sight or sound to recall the sense of supernatural security, when the only consolation is such as can be given by some one individual speaking for himself, or by the world, or by philosophy and science using terms in its dialect to puzzle desperate ignorance in those hours when

"The congregated college have concluded
That labouring art can never ransom nature
From her unaidable estate."

"You must have comfort," they will say, while crucifying perhaps the patient with their faces, and gazing strangely upon one another; and to what amounts their comforting? They might hear in return the taunt of poor Flamenco, in the old tragedy,

"Your comfortable words are like honey. They relish in your mouth that's whole; but in mine that's wounded they go down as if the sting of the bee were in them." See, on the other hand, they who come from shrift, and though it be in a sick chamber, how often is it, like Juliet, "with merry look." To Goethe even these very solemn rites seemed beautiful; they lead him to remark how the whole life of man is sanctified and made one by the Catholic sacraments; "and so," he concludes, "through a brilliant circle of holy acts, the beauty of which we have only briefly hinted at, the cradle and the grave, however far asunder they may chance to be, are bound in one continuous circle." Besides, even the necessity of such things in all cases seems to exist only in a mere popular and unfounded idea arising from a certain horror inspired by the thought of departing without some distinctive sign of Christianity being made, as when one died "unhousel'd, unanel'd," as poets say. Alphonso Antonio de Sarasa, in his treatise on the art of always rejoicing, says expressly that we should acquiesce in death both as to the manner and circumstances, as well as to the time, and that death without the sacraments should be accepted with cheerfulness as the will of God; and St. Gertrude being asked if such a death would not distress her, "Truly," she replied, "I should be far more distressed were I in the least matter to be unwilling to conform to the will of God*." It seems clear that the early anachorites frequently died thus, left the world unseen, and had known, too, that they would so fade away, while they took no steps to avoid that contingency. As for other accessories to a pious end, no thralldom is imposed on any one. Even the ancient monks felt free to indulge their particular fancy in regard to the manner of departing. St. Benedict would die standing; so he was sustained erect in the arms of his disciples till he expired.

In fine, the central principles combined in Catholicism, always in accordance with what is innocent and good in nature, seem to leave in free action all the natural remedies which exist against the fear of death, and in consequence of that sanction to change in many cases the view which men would otherwise have taken of what the philosopher called the most terrible of all terrible things.

It is a great thing to have sanctioned by the highest authority that one can conceive, and consecrated, as it were, so as to be more secure against every danger arising from a sophistical use of reason, all the heroic forces which exist in human nature. "The effeminate clinging to life as such, as a general or abstract idea, is," says Hazlitt, "the effect of a highly civilized and artificial state of society. If we look into the old histories and

romances before the belles-lettres neutralized human affairs, and reduced passion to a state of mental equivocation, we find the heroes and heroines not setting their lives 'at a pin's fee.' There is at least more of imagination in such a state of things, more vigour of feeling and promptitude to act, than in our lingering, languid, protracted attachment to life for its own poor sake. It is perhaps also better, as well as more heroic, to strike at some daring or darling object, and if we fail in that, to take the consequences manfully, than to renew the lease of a tedious, spiritless, charmless existence. Was there not a spirit of martyrdom, as well as a spice of reckless energy, in this bold defiance of death? Had not religion something to do with it; the implicit belief in a future life, which rendered this of less value, and embodied something beyond it to the imagination; so that the rough soldier, the fervent lover, the valorous knight, could afford to throw away the present venture, and take a leap into the arms of futurity, which the modern sceptic shrinks back from, with all his boasted reason and vain philosophy, weaker than a woman! I cannot help thinking so." Undoubtedly the fostering of certain natural resources against the fear of death is one result of central principles; for when we have passed through all the labyrinthine roads of human life, we find at the end, terminating at the centre in Catholicism, an exit also which leads out into free nature, so that man on embracing supernatural truth becomes then truly natural and heroic. But in the natural sphere exist many principles that dispel the apprehension of death. "Man," says a living writer, "was meant to be not the slave but the master of circumstances; and in proportion as he recovers his humanity, in every sense of that great obsolete word—in proportion as he gets back the spirit of manliness, which is self-sacrifice, affection, loyalty to an idea beyond himself, a God above himself, so far will he rise above circumstances, and wield them at his will *." Central principles, by restoring him to nature, impart the true, manly character; and therefore, for the sake of honour, rightly understood, and for the sake of love, to confine our observations to only these two instances, he braves and despises death. Honour, love, manhood, these are things more important, in reference to meeting death, than many acquisitions of the head, which occupy men in schools. St. Anselm said with his last breath, "I should have wished before I died to write down my ideas on the origin of evil; for I have made researches which will now be lost." Noble and affecting sentence, no doubt! but perhaps it may be allowable to suggest that it indicates also, as we before observed, a danger to which the mere literary and philosophic character is more liable than the unbookish and unpre-

* Kingsley.

rending one which we now have in view. Who needs to be told that it is a sentiment of nature which Alanus Magnus expresses, when he says, "Non ut diu vivas curandum est, sed ut satis bene? Diu vivere pertinet ad eventum, satis bene ad animum*."

"Life's but a word, a shadow, a melting dream,
Compared to essential and eternal honour."

When Thierry says to Ordella, preparing to die for her husband and her country, "Dare you venture for a poor barren praise you never shall hear to part with the sweet hopes of offspring?" she replies,

"With all but Heaven ——
And yet die full of children: he that reads me
When I am ashes is my son in wishes;
And those chaste dames that keep my memory,
Singing my yearly requiems, are my daughters."

Some one, in another of our ancient plays, exclaims, "We should adore thee, death, if constant virtue, not enforcement, built thy spacious temples." Yet there actually are occasions when men feel practically that it would be a happy and glorious thing to die, and need no force to urge them. The Cid heard in a vision that he was to conquer and to die within thirty days, and the news so delighted him that he leaped from his bed in a rapture of pleasure, and rendered thanks to God for the favour which was granted to him. This is what the Spaniards sing in the popular chant beginning "Estando en Valencia el Cid." To choose luxuriously to lie a-bed, and purge away one's spirit and send one's soul out in sugar-sops and syrups, when a noble cause might justify another mode of dying, would not be manly. Men will consider that an early death would have been to many, in regard to honourable memory and to all good, the greatest of benefits. An instance familiar to the old chivalry is alluded to in the ancient romance of the Infants of Lara, beginning

"Ay Dios, que buen caballero
Fue Don Rodrigo de Lara."

Ah! what a good knight was Don Rodrigo de Lara, who defeated five thousand Moors with the three hundred men he led on! If he had died then, what renown he would have left! He would not have slain his nephews, the seven infants of Lara, and he would not have sold their heads to the Moor! There is even, at certain epochs of the world, a noble affection for the memory of those generations that have immediately preceded

* Sum. de Arte Predicatoria, c. xi.

them on the road of the tombs, which has been found to impress some men so powerfully, that, to use the poet's words,

"Their conceit was nearer death than their powers."

This seems to have been the case with Chateaubriand and the Count de Maistre, as it was with so many illustrious persons in the sixteenth century, in whose sense it was happiness to die. It is an Homeric consolation, as may be witnessed in the line,

κἀθανε καὶ Πάτροκλος, ὅπερ σίο πολλὸν ἀμείνων.*

It is at all times familiar to those who have had loved companions, and who can sometimes say with the Breton minstrel, "I have not a brother on earth; in heaven I do not say that I am without one." It is soon needed in the school of the world; for

"Men drop so fast, ere life's mid stage we tread,
Few know so many friends alive as dead."

It would almost seem that there is even a mysterious bond which sometimes draws friends after each other to the next world. William of Newbury mentions an instance, saying, "Three memorable men, and in their life most dear friends to each other, departed from this life at nearly the same time, namely, Pope Eugene, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and Henry, archbishop of York†."

But if the sentiment of honour, of admiration, and of friendship be thus efficacious in changing the mere natural view of death, what shall we say of that of love, whose works are more than of a mortal temper?

"O for the gentleness of old romance,
The simple plaining of a minstrel's song!
Fair reader, at some old tale take a glance,
For here, in truth, it doth not well belong
To speak: O turn thee to some tender tale,
And taste the music of its vision pale."

It has been well observed, that "all which has been written in song or told in story of love and its effects, falls far short of its reality; that its evils and its blessings, its impotence and its power, its weakness and its strength, will continue for ever the theme of nature and of art, as it may often be in fact, in its results at least, 'the story without an end that angels throng to hear.' A compound feeling, as all belonging to our nature is, arising from the depths of misery, and fed with the grossest

food, descending from heaven, and yielding the most direct and evident manifestation of a divine and self-sacrificing spirit, it is at once the tyrant and the slave, being happier as the latter than as the former, since the perfection of love is obedience." Some there are disposed to condemn or ridicule those who are living witnesses of this power. But, as an admirable writer says, "in vain they moralize; in vain they teach us it is a delusion; in vain they dissect its inspiring sentiment, and would mortify us into misery by its degrading analysis. The lover glances with contempt at a cold-blooded philosophy; nature assures him that the emotion which he feels is beautiful, and he answers, Canst thou deprive the sun of its heat because its ray may be decomposed? or does the diamond blaze with less splendour because thou canst analyze its effulgence? Love is, in truth, a magnificent, sublime, divine sentiment. The man who loves and is loved becomes a transformed being. The accidents of earth touch him not. Revolutions of empire, mutations of opinion, are to him but the clouds and meteors of a stormy sky. The schemes and struggles of mankind are, in his thinking, but the anxieties of pigmies. Nothing can subdue him. He does not mingle in the paths of callous bustle, or hold himself responsible to the airy impostures before which other men bow down. Loss of fortune he laughs at. Love can illumine the dismal garret, and shed a ray of enchanting light over the close and busy city*." Love can conquer circumstance, "that unspiritual god," for equality is no rule in love's grammar; that sole unhappiness, to marry blood, is left to princes. Where love comes yoked with love, the best equality, without the level of estate or person, it renders golden the very things that we should otherwise fly from with disgust. It makes us adore poverty, and court all its circumstances, content with the hardest, humblest lot. For when the magic of love is present, all is bright and beautiful, and the meanest thing most dear.

"'Tis the ambition of the elf
To have all childish as himself,"

and therefore it is content with what suffices to the young.

"And as, in cloudy days, we see the sun
Glide over turrets, temples, richest fields,
All those left dark, and slighted in his way,
And on the wretched plight of some poor shed
Pour all the glories of his golden head,"

so love invests with a dream-like beauty the humblest lodging, the poorest court or alley. Names the most obscure, cited to inspire contempt, as when the comic imitator of Scott composed

his lines on Barbican and London Wall, may seem to the lover by his associations, worthy henceforth of the Muse herself. Love, too, smooths practically a descent from palaces to all the circumstances of the lowest condition ; it gives a relish to the coarsest fare, imparting a charm to the rudest substitutes required by the hardships of the common people, into whose language even it would turn sometimes all its thoughts. Love is thus a learned conjuror, and, with the glass of fancy, will do strange things.

“Such are his powers, whom time hath stiled,
Now swift, now slow, now tame, now wild ;
Now hot, now cold, now fierce, now mild ;
The eldest born, yet still a child.”

But it is on this road of the tombs that the effects of its magic seem the most wonderful, for it rivets us to an image of death, it endears to us a cemetery ; it reconciles even our very flesh to the grave. Hark the song beginning

“Love not ! the thing you love may die.”

O shallow poet ! say rather “Love, that you may follow if it dies.” Let us mark for a moment its power, both as love frustrated, and as love, albeit in death, crowned with success.

“Love is a mystery,” says a popular writer ; “it distastes every thing but itself ; its joys are a pleasant dream—a bewilderment of the senses ; its pains an acute reality, scarcely more indeed sometimes not endurable ; and therefore broken hearts are every year causing a death which is ascribed to other causes. O life ! O world ! cover me ! let me be no more ! to see that perfect mirror of pure innocence wherever I gazed and grew happy and good, shivered to dust ! Why should not I wash hand in hand with death, to find my love out ? Might our souls together climb to the height of their eternity, and there enjoy what earth denied us—happiness !

“——— Though our bridal bed
Be not adorned with roses, 'twill be green ;
We shall have virgin laurel, cypress, yew,
To make us garlands ; though no pine do burn,
Our nuptial shall have torches, and our chamber
Shall be cut out of marble, where we'll sleep,
Free from all care for ever.”

Such are the thoughts and agonies, only expressed in poetic language, that in their abuse cause even those tragedies which so frequently fall under the notice of the magistrates of our metropolis ; such are the voices that are echoed here as each new

loved one passes ; and how rapidly do they pass ! Every one remembers what another poet cries,

“ O death, all eloquent ! you only prove
What dust we doat on, when 'tis man we love.”

“ O happy day ! ” exclaims Petrarch, “ when leaving the terrestrial prison I shall throw off the heavy perishable garment in which I have been wrapt, escape from the thick darkness, and rise to the cloudless space in which I shall behold my Lord and her whom I have loved. Each day it seems a thousand years since I began to walk by the side of my cherished guide, who has led me through the world, and now conducts me by a better road to a life exempt from pain. And the artifices of the world cannot retain me, for I know them ; and so great is the light of love which shines within my heart and reaches heaven, that I fear no longer the menaces of that death which our King endured with cruel pangs, in order to make me firm and bold to imitate Him. Its image will no more trouble my serenity. Death cannot render the sweet face bitter, but the sweet face can give sweetness to death. To die well, what need of other aid ? Besides, He assists me who teaches me all that is good. He who was not sparing of his blood, who with his feet burst the gates of Tartarus, comes to encourage me by the example of his death.” Thus, when death parts two lovers, is the survivor armed and invincible. But again, circumstances cause love often to be frustrated, and young creatures to be left rapt in tender hoverings over a vanished bliss.

“ For side by side, throughout our life,
Do love and sorrow move,
And flowerless and verdureless
The heart they will not prove *.”

Though men take a kind of joy in their afflictions, when they come from those they love, and though invoking hope, they would wish to think it not quite in vain “ to sigh out sonnets to the midnight air,” insufficient are deemed to be all the subterfuges but one to which such disappointment looks forward. Death has no rival, for instance, in the consolation invoked by Violeto, when all he can ask for is to look and mourn. There is also the separation caused by some fault, perhaps involuntarily committed. Oh ! then indeed is the anguish poignant, and past all remedy but what is brought by death. Then we hear sung,

“ The sunny side of life is gone,
Its shadows now are mine,
And thorns are springing in my heart,
Where blossoms used to twine.

"I do not blame thee for my lot,
I only pray for thee,
That thou mayst from the tempter's power
(Oh, joyful thought!) be free ;
That thou mayst bend above my grave
With penitence sincere,
And for the broken-hearted one
Let fall a pious tear."

There is, in fine, the separation caused by the will of others—
"the parting between two hearts with but one thought, two
flowers with but one stem"—when we hear sung,

"I've press'd my last kiss on thy brow,
I've breath'd my last farewell,
And hush'd within my breaking heart
The love I may not tell.
I sought to win thee for mine own,
To wear thee in my heart ;
That dream is o'er—I leave thee now,
And bless thee as we part.

"The cherish'd hopes of other days
Time never may restore ;
But, dear one lost ! I love thee still
As fondly as of yore.
Thy low, sweet tones are in my ear
Where'er my footsteps roam,
And pleasant memories of thee
Will make my heart their home.

"And when my bark, now passion-toss'd
Upon life's wintry sea,
Shall sink beneath the stormy wave,
Wilt thou not weep for me ?"

Our old English dramatists recur often to such scenes ; but never, perhaps, with more pathetic tenderness than where Valerio is represented catching at some vague hope of a reunion. He kneels and says,

"Heaven, be not angry, and I have some hope yet,
To whom I kneel ; be merciful to me,
Look on my harmless youth, angels of pity,
And from my bleeding heart wipe off my sorrows !
The power, the pride, the malice, and injustice
Of cruel men are bent against mine innocence.
You that control their wills ——
And bow their stubborn arms, look on my weakness,
And when you please, and how, allay my miseries."

Without, it may be hoped, incurring any suspicion of paganism, one may say with Tibullus,

"Qui primus earam juveni, earumque puellæ
Eripuit juvenem, ferreus ille fuit."

"Did it happen to you," as Battus asks Milo in the Idyl, "to desire an absent person *? to desire with the earnestness of love one whom you have no hope of again seeing? Then you know what it is to feel the heart wither; then you know the wound that sweet music makes; then you know what it is to be deaf to the nightingale, blind to the loveliness of nature, dead to all but one poor ghost-like image, engrossing the fancy, and rendering all things present like a painful dream. In the volume of your sadness you may want those who can read, though you bear wounds upon you in wide and spacious characters; but an open force hath torn your sinews; you are past all the remedy of art or time, the flatteries of court, of fame, or honours."

"Thus in the summer a tall flourishing tree,
Transplanted by strong hand, with all her leaves
And blooming pride upon her, makes a show
Of spring, tempting the eye with wanton blossom;
But not the sun, with all his amorous smiles,
The dews of morning, or the tears of night,
Can root her fibres in the earth again,
Or make her bosom kind, to growth and bearing,
But the tree withers; and those very beams,
That once were natural warmth to her soft verdure,
Dry up her sap, and shoot a fever through
The bark and rind, till she becomes a burthen
To that which gave her life."

Men are such forest trees. When these removals are effected, you will never see them flourishing again. They are, for this life, past reviving. "What a fleet as well as fatal tragedy! All that had hitherto made life delightful, all the fine emotions, all the bright hopes, and the rare accomplishments of our nature, are dark delusions now—cruel mockeries. Why, what is life, they cry, that it can bring upon its swift wing such dark, such agonizing vicissitudes as these? It is not life †." Then do they discover what is at the bottom of human sorrow, and they know henceforth what it is to have death in scorn, so as even to take from choice the road on which it is most accustomed to pass; for

"O love! how potent hast thou been to teach
Strange journeyings!"

* Theoc.

† Henrietta Temple.

Forced separation, removal to another place without a hope of return, the prohibition of others,—how many feel all this! how many know what it is to see the last look! They part, and yet there is no scene acted. Love in its brightest hours manufactures no elaborate airs. By some one merely sitting or walking quietly at another's side, saying little, and looking less, it secures its power. In its sorrows it coins nothing. So here, the one most tender is quite cheerful to all appearance. "How do people part? They say farewell. Then farewell—is that all? Yes. So you'll do no more than say farewell? It is enough: as much good will may be conveyed in one word as in many*." O great painter of nature, how true to life is this! The face, perhaps, even is turned from you; the book is taken up again as if all the thoughts were in it, as if you were already gone, though poets say,

"Like trees wind-parted, that embrace anon,
True love so often goes before 'tis gone."

Well, with only another look you are gone; but this undisturbed, free manner was merely a thing put on to hide what was in the heart; for

"The most we love, when we the least express it,"

special inattention, as well as special attention, being often a symptom of deep love. So the parting is achieved in silence, or with careless voice. But what passes after it? Ah! she has a good cry, to use her own words, extorted later in a calmer moment. "How could I help it," she writes, "being a woman?" What passes on the morrow? Ah! how pale art thou who wast so bland and merry in our meadows! The secret explaining the change could be expressed in the lines—

"Alas! will all this gush of feelings pass
Away in solitude? and must they wane
Like melodies upon a sandy plain,
Without an echo? Am I to be left
So sad, so melancholy, so bereft?"

Calantha, in the tragedy of the Broken Heart, only gives utterance to what many in real life have felt, and do, perhaps, at this very moment feel. She says,

"Shrieks and outcries have an end, and such
As can find vent for all their sorrows
Thus, may live to court new pleasures—
They are the silent griefs which cut the heart-strings.
Let me die smiling."

* Jane Eyre.

Thus, then, does the view of death become changed in every respect by means of love. Henceforth it can separate us from nothing that we care for ; the world is grown for us desolate.

“ ——— If you see the trees
Widow'd of leaves, the earth grown hard, and spoil'd
Of the green mantles which she wont to wear,
You wonder not if winter then appears,
And all things haste to die.”

So when the kaleidoscope of love is removed without hope of recovery, youth itself soon finds that life is colourless, as, in fact, the pleasant sorceries that keep us within the circle of mortality such willing worshippers are then for most men at an end. Then, wherever walks such youth or manhood lonely and forsaken, the melancholy feet of him that is the father of decay seem to have left their traces, as when

“ The cold wind breathes from a chillier clime,
And forth it fares on one of those still eves,
Touch'd with the dewy sadness of the time,
To think how the bright months had spent their prime.”

Gone are the flowers and fruits ; gone the pale lovers who used to tarry under the hawthorn's blossom bough. But such is the tide of human life. Why should those who are thus bereft fear to follow, and shake this piece of frailty off ? Have they not lived and loved ? Enough.

“ They have done their journey here, their day is out ;
All that the world has else is foolery,
Labour, and loss of time. What should they live for ?
Who would be old ? 'tis such a weariness,
Such a disease, that hangs like lead upon us.
As it increases, so vexations,
Griefs of the mind, pains of the feeble body.
Besides, the fair soul's old too, it grows covetous ;
Which shows all honour is departed from us,
And we are earth again !
To die a young man is to be an angel ;
Our great good parts put wings unto our souls.”

Accordingly, apart from those divine considerations which of themselves loosen earthly chains, you shall now see death so scorned by youth—I mean for any terror or regrets—that you shall think him its slave to take its upper garment off. But hear still what it then whispers to itself :

“ ——— Night will strew
On the damp grass myriads of lingering leaves,
And with them I shall die ; nor much it grieves

To die, when summer dies on the cold sward.
 Why, I have been a butterfly, a lord
 Of flowers, garlands, love-knots, silly posies,
 Groves, meadows, melodies, and arbour-roses ;
 My kingdom's at its death, and just it is
 That I should die with it : so in all this
 We miscall grief, fate, sorrow, heart-break, woe,
 What is there to plain of * ?”

All this, then, however childish it may seem to some, involves the principle of what is most ancient in history, and reveals one real and efficacious force existing in our nature to arm it against the fear of death ; for then men are ready and resigned to die, wishing even that the form and shape of human being may no more cross their vision. On earth there is no more joy for them ; their sun is set ; the lustre of their life is gone ; the lute has lost its tone, the flower its perfume, the bird its airy wing. You cannot reason with such tenderness and grief as this ; nor, indeed, would it much avail to make them cling to existence here under such conditions, since life without love and the sense of being loved has no attractions, and little prospect of utility, for those who have no reason founded on especial vocations to dispense with it. They feel that it is love which gives it value, energy, fruitfulness ; as in truth it is the want of love that lies at the bottom of all our sorrows and inactivity ; but here springs the advantage of this mysterious power, for then death itself, that would otherwise be so abhorred perhaps, seems in a certain sense to answer some of love's purposes ; and, therefore, the last and only act that they can now perform well is prized by them, showing that their gentleness does as well accord with death as life. They do not believe with the author of *Venetia* that the links of passion, formed by love at first sight, which elsewhere he thinks alone the true love, are as fragile as they are glittering ; that the bosom on which they have reposed all their secret sorrows and sanguine hopes would ever become the very heart to triumph in their perishing. No. They are woodmen, and can choose their deer, though it be in the dark ; all their discretion is not lost ; for our reasons are not prophets when oft our fancies are ; and so whatever may have occurred to shake their youthful confidence in man's integrity, they have still an unbroken reliance on woman's faith. Human, she will not deceive ; woman, she will not forsake them. She has found them noble ; they shall find her true. Now “of all the paths that lead to a woman's love, pity,” says the poet, “is among the straightest.” They would, therefore, suffer for her sake, and

even endure death, only saying with Virolet to Juliana, "Think of me, but not often, for fear my faults should burthen your affections ; but pray for me."

"Tu tamen amisso non numquam flebis amico :
Fas est præteritos semper amare viros."

They feel assured that the sweet face which smiled upon their love will be raised in their behalf over their grave ; that when they are dead their memory will be secreted in the unfathomed depth of a woman's heart ; for they do not go out like tedious tales forgotten ; they die young, and they believe that however their body fall into dust, perhaps, when they are ashes the ruby lips they hung upon will vow to keep a requiem in the soul as for a friend close treasured in the bosom. They think affections never die ; that, when life is over, they take the wings of a diviner world, and grow immortal. These lovers' unities they will not doubt of ; and such a faith is enough to change their whole view of what is best for themselves. Addressing in their mind the beloved one, they can say truly,

"All that was earth falls off ; my spirit's free ;
I have nothing left now, but my soul and thee."

And, in fact, love can do more than fortune or than death, and so the sequel often verifies what ancient harps have said,

"Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord !

The body itself, though dead, is loved, as in the poem of Keats—

"Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.
'Twas love cold,—dead indeed, but not dethroned."

So death will be welcomed, or as Schiller says, "The grave will seem to be a bridal bed, over which Aurora spreads her golden canopy, and spring strews her fairest flowers. Death to him who has such thoughts blending eventually with diviner hopes is not a skeleton ; he is a gentle, smiling boy, blooming as the divinity of love ; a silent ministering spirit, who guides the exhausted pilgrim through the desert of eternity, unlocks for him the fairy palace of everlasting joy, invites him in with friendly smiles, and vanishes for ever !" These are occasions when Ford's beautiful lines may be repeated, as expressing personal experience :

"I did not think that death had been so sweet,
Nor I so apt to love him. I could ne'er die better
Had I stay'd forty years for preparation ;
For I'm in charity with all the world."

These are occasions when Bellario's apostrophe to the wild flowers, as he lies down on the grass, will seem the spontaneous effusion of the heart :

"——— Bear me, thou gentle bank,
For ever, if thou wilt. You sweet ones all,
Let me unworthily press you : I could wish
I rather were a corse, strew'd o'er with you,
Than quick above you."

Thus does death itself, by means of nature and its heavenly ally, that central truth which employs, and, as it were, consecrates all its genuine attributes, enter into the beautiful view of the universal order of which we form parts, and leave each observer to exclaim,

"How bold the flight of passion's wandering wing !
How swift the step of reason's firmer tread !
How calm and sweet the victories of life !
How terrorless the triumph of the grave !"

The natural desire is suffered to combat the natural horror of dissolution, and thenceforth the field is open for the action of those divine motives into which the central wisdom knows how to transfuse all others.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ROAD OF THE TOMBS (*terminated*).



EVER is the path we tread so dreary, but, if we comply with what is prescribed by central truth, the favouring smiles of Heaven will shed some solace. Here through the external instruments that faith provides, assistance comes to us without our co-operation. It is not alone by changing the mere natural view of death, and by sanctioning and confirming the vital principles of our nature, that proof is given of the presence of a central attraction upon this road. Catholicism draws men towards itself by the direct positive assistance and by the great practical benefit which it yields in furnishing those who are migrating hence with persons eminently qualified to console them, and those who have left this life not alone with mourners for a day, but with assistants who will supply what is

required both for what has departed and for what remains, which is a benefit of which our nature feels the want, since, with the exception of a kind of governmental class in some northern countries, during the last three hundred years, the whole human race seems from the beginning to have agreed in recognizing that there are things which both the soul and the body continue after death to demand, namely, prayer, remembrance, and a tomb.

During the sufferings of one kind or other which frequently precede his departure from this world, man has need of living comforters and of living advisers ; of friends, in other words, to stand by his side in this last action. " Through necessity," says the author of the *Magnum Speculum*, " we relate the bodily pains of this holy man, in order that we may not be disturbed when any sufferings of this kind befall just men in their sickness." It is not every one who on such occasions can dispense with the assistance of persons devoted to such works of charity as visiting the sick. It is not every one who can say with Marina de Escobar, that if they knew they could recover their health by the simple act of extending their hand, they would not do so, being so impressed with a conviction that it is good to suffer in this life*. Neither, again, can persons in general expect that extraordinary assistance which is said to have been vouchsafed to her ; for during thirty years she had borne a painful sickness in a dark little chamber, eleven feet high and broad, and thirteen feet long, which had no other light but candles which burned by night and some hours of the day ; while notwithstanding, the air, we are told, of this little room struck every one as if it was in the midst of a field open to the winds of heaven†. According to our common lot, afflictions, or at least peculiar wants of some kind or other, precede our death, and therefore men must be attracted by whatever yields cheerful, sensible, and affectionate persons devoted to the care and consolation of the sick and dying. The world without Catholicism is not so richly provided with characters of this description that it can dispense with a supernatural source which forms them. Its friends are not often met with in a sick room at midnight. They will avoid the contagion of what at least seems to them as sorrow, and often act the part of the captain in the *Diary of a Physician*, who, on being sent for by his former intimate acquaintance, Ellingstone, on his deathbed, sends back a viva voce message that for the moment he is making up a match at billiards, and who rides up to the door next day and leaves a card for him, without asking to see him. If moved to spend a few minutes in such a room, it will be a distasteful meeting to all parties. Its philanthropist

* Vit. ejus, P. ii. lib. iii. c. 3.

† P. ii. lib. iii. c. 2.

himself will often take leave of a dying friend, saying, "Sick sir, farewell! To no end should I sit longer here." Or, perhaps, like Diana in the Hippolytus,

καὶ χαῖρ' ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐ θέμις φθιτοῦς ὄρᾶν,
οὐδ' ὄμμα χραίνειν θανασίμοισιν ἐκπνοαῖς *.

But Catholicism provides a race of persons loving humanity after the old and natural fashion, whose lives are devoted to console with every tender care those who are near their end, and with whom these deaths are such acquainted things, that yet their heart dissolves not. It attaches such value to this work, for which the commonest and least pretending characters seem suited, that men aspiring to perfection are called on to partake in it. "When you rise in the morning," says the rule of St. Anthony, "inquire for the sick who are with you." On the feast of St. Camillus de Lellis, founder of the regular clerks to serve the sick, the Spanish choirs sing as follows :

- "Exultent miseri, turbaque pauperum,
Afflictus, moriens, pestequae tabidus;
Ardens nam Scraphim mittitur æthere,
Omnes Lellius ut juvet.
- "Pauperum strages, miseransque luctum
Tot malis firmum ferat ut levamen,
Ordinem condit, data sacra Jesu
Jussa secutus.
- "Blanda ceu mater, pater ut benignus
Mulcet ægrotos, et agone mortis
Sublevat duro, comitum frequenti
Agnine septus.
- "Hoc sibi gratam reputat quietem,
Hoc placet solum, miseros levare,
Hoc pius longo meditatur omnis
Tempore vitæ.
- "Erigit lapsos, tenet et labantes,
Firmat erectos, pietas Camilli
Despicit nullum, miseransque mulcet,
Protegit omnes."

There is something in the fact of attendance on the sick which forcibly recalls the image of the Catholic Church ; for that kind of service requires much compassion, and every one has heard some traits of the charity of those belonging to her communion. Patience is greatly necessary, and wondrous is known to be their patience. The sick need examples of patience to confirm their own. "What shall I pray for in regard to this sick person?"

asked St. Gertrude; and the reply she heard was, "Ask that she may preserve her patience *." In sickness the prayer of St. Gertrude would guide men to the Church as to the consolation and joy and glory of the sick †. "Revera justorum presentia," says Cæsar of Heisterbach, "morientibus multum esse necessaria ‡." Some few men, it is true, are known to have desired a solitary death, and to have actually departed without witnesses, like the stag in the forest, that when mortally wounded will turn aside and leave the pack, and seek some out of the way place in which to die alone. Fabert, marshal of France, died as he had always wished, no one present. He ordered every one to depart, and then holding the book of Psalms open at the psalm *Miserere*, he was found to have expired on his knees §. St. Ignatius of Loyola, preserving his humility to the last, departed like a man of no importance, being nearly abandoned; for no one thought him so near his end, and he was left almost alone. But these exceptional instances, and no doubt they do not represent the general wishes of humanity. Sympathizing witnesses and charitable advisers, not excluding an eye to cheer you, a hand to guide you, a bosom to lean on, are both in most cases desired; and Catholicism, which attaches such importance to our last hours, that the poet who saw the manners it produces says, "More are men's ends marked than their lives before," is found to yield both. In the primitive traditions of India it is taught that the thought which occupies a person at the hour of his death is decisive for his future state. Exaggeration is characteristic of all error; it cannot be denied, however, that in supplying observers and advisers, Catholicism seems to suppose some important consequences to be depending on, or at least to be sometimes foreshadowed by, those last thoughts and words which the sceptical sneerers of the present day would resolve into delirious rant, confused, disordered faculties, and superstition; while physicians themselves, like Samuel Warren, would interpret them rather as light streaming upon the soul as the wall between time and eternity was breaking down. The central attraction of Catholicity would, at all events, act upon those who are inclined to be attentive observers of the last moments of men, as the wise and good in all ages seem to have been disposed. Thus in the beginning of the *Phædo*, Echecrates complains of having been left without any details respecting the last moments of Socrates. "No one," he says, "has lately come from Athens who could give us any information respecting his death, further than that having drunk the poison he died. As for other circumstances, which we are so anxious to learn, we are in total ignorance; no one has related

* Vita ejus, iii. 74. † Preces Gertrudianæ, P. viii. ‡ ii. 17.

§ Perrault, *Hom. illust. de France*, tom. ii. fol. 36.

any thing." Death is a great teacher; and therefore no doubt all whom it instructs should be listened to. We should sooner believe one accent from a good man's breath when his just soul was parting, than all men's commentaries; and as John Picus of Miranda says, "Men of another character at the same moment have often a great change of sentiments to communicate; for morituri his invident, quos despexerunt, laudant quos deriserunt, et imitari eos vellent quos non possunt, quos dum poterant sequi persequi maluerunt." Moved by the advice of Montaigne, by reading also a little book of Pliny, in which he relates that Titinius Capito had written the deaths of illustrious men, and that Fannius had described those of the persons who had been slain by Nero, James de Richebourg, a juriscult of Antwerp, wrote his great work entitled *Ultima Verba Factaque et Ultimæ Voluntates Morientium Philosophorum Virorumque et Fœminarum Illustrum*. St. Gundekar II. bishop of Eystad, had a custom of exactly noting down the deaths of all the bishops in the empire who died after his ordination, which catalogue exists from the year 1057 to 1075*. The old European literature abounds with works devoted to a description of particular deaths, which are not devoid of interest, as may be witnessed in the letter from Father Michael de Orenza, confessor of Marina de Escobar, describing the circumstances of her last sickness, death, and burial, which he addressed to the count, duke of Olivarez, the Lord Gaspar de Guzman, first minister of the Catholic king†. There is a central attraction, therefore, for persons who desire that their manner of dying may be marked and their last poor words noted down. But it is in yielding men who give the best advice and the best consolation that Catholicism, in regard to such occasions, seems to present itself as unrivalled. History and poetry are concerned with this theme. Let us observe a few instances. "The archbishop of Lyons," says Pierre Mathieu, the historian of Henry IV., "falling sick, a Capuchin came to see him, and exhorting him to meet death with courage, named him simply Pierre de Pinse, without other ceremony. At this unusual address the archbishop raised his head and eyes to see who it was who spoke. One remarked that the words had struck him, and that he received them as a warning of his departure, which took place at midnight‡." The Spanish romantic ballads present another example of this kind of courage, which sometimes extraordinary circumstances require. In that beginning "De Zamora sole Dolfos," where it is related how the traitor Dolfos wounded mortally the King Don Sancho under the walls of Zamora, we read as follows: "All come to see the

* Raderus, *Bavaria Sancta*, ii. 209.

† Vita ejus, P. ii. lib. iii. c. 2.

‡ Hist. de Hen. IV. liv. ii.

king dying—all speak flattery to him. No one tells him the truth, excepting one good old knight, the count of Cabra, who says, ‘You are my king and my lord, and I am your vassal. You ought to think about yourself. I speak plainly to you. Take care of your soul, attend not to your body, commend yourself to God; for lo, an unhappy day!’ ‘Thanks, count, for your counsel.’ Nevertheless, the harsh and unfeeling announcements which some persons recommend seem not only an outrage to nature, which has infinite secrets for consoling our mortality, but uncalled for by those central principles which cause a just appreciation of the value of every thing belonging to it, and which enable men to reconcile all duties with each other. If there are times when truth, however stern, must be communicated to the dying, Catholicism seeks with infinite discretion to meet the exceptional case, while its general precept seems to be to obviate all needless pain,

“And watch intently nature’s gentle doings,
Which will be found softer than ringdoves’ cooings.”

The letter of Alphonso, the magnanimous king of Arragon, to his young friend, Gabriel Surrentinus, who was sick, presents a beautiful instance of the delicate manner which emanates from Catholicism where there is an absolute necessity of awakening those who are wholly unprepared for meeting death. “Obey your physicians,” says the king, “but trust in God more than in their counsels; for He is the health not alone of life, but of death. If Him you have offended, seek by contrition, prayer, confession, and the sacred mysteries to be reconciled to Him; and when you have done so, commit yourself to his will with a joyful and brave spirit, for He alone knows what is best for us all. Nor let the fear, or rather opinion, of death offend you; for death is really life to the dying; it is the beginning of life, of that life which is subject neither to grief, nor pain, nor fear, nor to any death. God, who is our beginning and end, causes us at his good pleasure to be born and to die, and this belongs to his divinity. One thing only He has left to our disposition, namely, to choose a holy or a wicked life. Let us, then, resolve to die now in Christ, that we may rise again, and so pass from corruption to incorruption, and from mortality and perturbations to immortality and peace. Then will death be indeed the greatest of all good. Let us remind each other, and believe firmly, that God made man in his own likeness, and gave him a spirit like his own, so that when we shall lay aside this flesh, we shall be admitted to the society of his angels. O the ineffable benignity of God to give to those who believe in his name the privilege of being the sons of God! And can the momentary agitation of death, which is necessary to this consummation, be sufficient then to alarm

you? Far be such weakness from us. No, let us never be so foolish as to suppose that nature ought to obey us, instead of our obeying nature; and as to your youth, if you only consider how very soon that would have passed away, the thought of dying at present, rather than later, will trouble you but little. If it be the will of God that you should die thus young, give Him thanks joyously and obey." The youth, being thus encouraged, died soon after in great serenity, and the king commanded splendid obsequies, and caused these lines to be placed on his tomb:

"Qui fuit Alphonsi quondam pars maxima Regis
Gabriel hac modica nunc tumulatur humo *."

Catholicism, it must be confessed, seems, at least on the page of history, never at a loss to find the puissant spell that can inspire resignation. Samuel Warren, in his *Diary of a Late Physician*, speaks of a minister opposed to it, who had nothing better to propose to a dying youth than a discussion on the question of free will; but the man of central wisdom, however stuffed his head may be with the quibbles of the schools, is not reduced to such resources on occasions of this kind. Moreover, the significant guide whom Catholicism yields here is not a mercenary or a cold official, like Jacques Roux, refusing in the temple to receive the testament of Louis XVI., and saying, "*Je ne suis chargé que de te conduire à la mort.*" Besides advice, he has words of comfort, promises of compliance with a last request, pledged with the face of honour;

"And there are words which, falling on the ear,
Engender hope and dwell within the heart,
Making rich music."

Posthumous virtue, which appears in men who grow desperately charitable at their end, might indeed become a source of mere illusion, and Catholicism, which execrates avarice in layman and priest alike, would always dictate caution in regard to it. What treachery would it be to encourage hopes that compulsory alms alone may yet redeem, alms given in a large manner to defraud just heirs, with loud laments, perhaps, that a soul can be saved no cheaper! Catholicism has an influence on will-making, restraining persons who, as Hazlitt says, "would exercise a natural perversity to the end, and make their last act, perhaps under a cloak of piety, agree with the former tenor of their lives in caprice and spite, disappointing as many people as possible, disinheriting relations for venial offences, or out of pique to revenge some imaginary slight, or imposing absurd commands upon survivors, to have their parts in life, after they have quitted it, rehearsed by

proxy, making some whim immortal." The central wisdom inspires a wish to be just, and reminds men that "the property we have derived from our kindred reverts tacitly to them; and that not to let it take its course is a sort of violence done to nature as well as custom." When Ciampini left all his property to found a kind of seminary at Rome, and bequeathed nothing to his brother, who had eight children, Dom Estiennot, the Benedictine, writing from Rome to Mabillon, after mentioning the circumstance, adds, "This makes every one here cry out, and it is thought that his testament will be set aside; for it calls for vengeance from heaven to have left more than 200,000 francs to this college, and only a hundred crowns to each of his poor relations*." This is the way in which men were taught by the old-fashioned Catholicism to treat or regard such wills. But while thus prudent and disinterested, it appears desirous of conceding somewhat to the natural and universal sentiment of mankind, which would not sentence charity to die before ourselves, nor exclude the last hours of life from being marked by acts of kindness, liberality, and gratitude. It would not condemn men to perfect inaction when occasion comes for them to say, "Let's seal our testament and prepare for heaven;" and as we are informed by them who seem to know some part of the way, "Love's not the farthest path that leads thither." "When men think that they are about to die, they have," says Plato, "embarrassing and fearful words on their tongue against legislators claiming the right of disposing of their property according to their own pleasure; and it is certain that the ancient legislators have been intimidated by such discourses, so that, dreading the complaints of dying men, they have made laws which allow them to dispose of their property absolutely as they choose †." "Defuncti voluntate nihil potentius apud nos," says Quinctilian, "nihil nostro animo sacratius esse debet ‡." Times and opinions are changed since then; but whatever states may wisely or immoderately enjoin, Catholicism will ever inspire private men, at least personally, with the same sentiment, and for trusts to defeat, without injustice to others, an unjust and inhuman desire in a legislator, it will always yield men who can be depended on.

But, in fine, the season for all such comforting has an end. From the chamber of the dying, friends, if in a Catholic country, hasten to the church where a solitary candle on the altar signifies to the faithful that they should pray for a soul which is now within few minutes of departing. Sometimes even the blessed sacrament is exposed with the same intention. The very ceremonial of Catholicism on these occasions has been sufficient to

* Correspond. de Mab. let. cccix.

† De Leg. lib. xi.

‡ Declam. 311.

furnish some beholders with an efficacious guidance for the rest of their lives. While James Taust, the fourteenth general of the Order of Mercy, was dying in the convent of Valencia, Mahomet Abdala, one of the chief African Moors, landed in that city, proceeding an ambassador to the king of Castille. He prayed the nobles who were appointed to pay him honours by the king of Arragon to show him the principal churches of the city. Happening to enter that of La Mercy at the moment when the monks were hastening to repeat the prayers of recommendation of the soul for the general who was in his agony, the Moor through curiosity followed them to his room, and begged of them to interpret and explain the prayers and the words of the general, who invoked the Blessed Virgin. He was so moved by what he saw and heard, that he declared his desire to be instructed and baptized. Some time after, accordingly, his baptism took place with pomp at Saragossa, the king of Arragon standing godfather, who gave him the name of Louis.

At length it is all over; our road must lead us to the bourne that its title indicated. This creature who was once the smiling child, the comely youth, or light-hearted girl, whose face was like the cloudless splendour of a sunny day—this creature who has known all the pathways and avenues of the forest of life, having tasted this existence in all its vicissitudes to old age, has departed where no eye or thought can follow. The man is gone, and death hath in few hours made him as stiff as if all the winds of winter had thrown cold upon him, and whispered him to marble. See where he lies a pattern for a tomb. *Solum sibi super est sepulchrum*. The scene impresses an image on the beholder's mind that time never can obliterate.

“So shall the fairest face appear
When youth and years are flown;
Such is the robe that kings must wear
When death has reft their crown.”

And yet, strange to say, the force of central principles seems to produce an effect, as we before remarked, even upon the dead body itself, rendering the countenance beautiful and significant of the repose it has always desired. The Princess de Condé, after relating the death of Mother Magdalen of St. Joseph the Carmelite, says, “Though I was always afraid of seeing a person dead, I had no repugnance whatever on this occasion. I was for a long time almost alone with the body, and I even felt pleasure in looking at her face, and unwilling to leave the spot.” But be this as it may, where death has entered, in every case the central attraction continues to exist; for then to the survivors Catholicism is presented as the fruitful source of a consolation to the living, and from which not even the departed are excluded,

unless all antiquity was mistaken in regard to the condition of their intermediate state.

“O very gloomy is the house of woe,
Where tears are falling while the bell is knelling,
With all the dark solemnities which show
That death is in the dwelling !

“O very, very dreary is the room
Where love, domestic love, no longer nestles,
But smitten by the common stroke of doom,
The corpse lies on the trestles !”

What, then, are the consolations which the Catholic religion yields? In the first place, the stoical insensibility that would suppress all mourning with Young Loveless's argument, “all this helps not; he was too good for us, and let God keep him,” being wholly foreign to it, there is no attempt to prohibit that lamentation which, by a provision of nature, relieves the afflicted. “Versa est in luctum cythara mea *.”

“————— Innocent maid !
Stifle thine heart no more ;—nor be afraid
Of angry powers : there are angels
Will shade us with their wings.”

“I remember,” says the Princess de Condé, speaking of Mother Magdalen de St. Joseph the Carmelite, “that at the death of my brother, the Duc de Montmorency, seeing me greatly afflicted, ‘Weep, madame,’ she said, ‘check not your tears ; I weep with you, but the heart must be for God ;’ and then she wept, and I felt my sorrow somewhat assuaged.”

Tibullus left minute directions as to the manner in which he wished his remains to be treated after death †. No one now would think of prescribing so many expensive cares. But humanity has still its tenderness ; so then you may find them winding of the corse,

“And there is such a solemn melody,
’Tween doleful songs, tears, and sad elegies,
Such as old grandames, watching by the dead,
Were wont to outwear the night with, believe me,
Men have no eyes to guide them forth the room,
They are so o’ercharg’d.”

“Note,” says St. Anthony of Padua, “that there is a triple evening or vespers, and a triple morn or matins, and in both are weeping and joy. The first evening was the fall of Adam, in which he was ejected weeping from Paradise. The first morn

* Job.

† Elegia, ii.

was the nativity of Christ, which was a great joy. The second evening was the death of Christ, in which also was weeping. The second morn was his resurrection, in which was joy. The third evening is the death of each man, in which again is weeping. The third morn will be the general resurrection, when joy eternal will commence*." Even when the best die there is cause for lamentation, since, as the poet says,

"Stars fall but in the grossness of our sight,
A good man dying, th' earth doth lose a light."

The phoenix with her wings, when she is dying, can fan her ashes into another life; but when his breath returns to heaven, the world must be eternal loser. Catholicism, therefore, yields mourners, of whom one may say,

— τῶν δὲ στοναχὴ κατὰ δώματ' ὀρώρει.

The grief felt by the nuns of St. Radegond at her death is proclaimed even in the hymn for her office,

"O quam sollicitis mœsta sororibus
Lugubri resonant omnia carmine,
Quam marcent lacrymis ora tepentibus
Sub mortem famulæ Dei †."

At a funeral where things pass in the old way, as in some provinces of France, one may often remark the natural grief of the assistants, when the widow, sister, or mother of the dead enters the church in a primitive manner, supported between two matrons, and so well accompanied that one might suppose all the others of the town followed her similarly enveloped in black folds, when such a moving picture of distress presents itself that one is reminded of some of the ancient pictures of our Lady of Dolours. Indeed, Vasari says that Raphael, when composing his Burial of Christ for the church of San Francesco at Perugia, derived his inspirations from observing the grief and pain of affectionate relatives when bearing to the tomb the corpse of one who had been dear to them. On these occasions sometimes it may be remarked that the first intonations of the choir produce an effect upon the chief mourner which can be described literally in Homer's words,—

τὴν δὲ κατ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἐρεβεννὴ νύξ ἐκάλυψεν
ἦριπε δ' ἐξοπίσω, ἀπὸ δὲ ψυχὴν ἐκάπυσσε †.

Catholicism, developing all the tender, sympathetic, and exalted feelings of nature, has always a tendency to produce scenes of

* Dom. xvii. post Trinit. † De Fleuri, Hist. de S. Radégonde.
‡ Il. xxii. 465.

this deep tragic kind belonging to primitive ages, as when the Trojans had laid out the body of Hector,

——— *παρὰ δ' εἶσαν ἀοιδούς,
θρήνων ἑξάρχους, οὔτε στονόεσαν ἀοιδὴν
οἱ μὲν ἄρ' ἐθρήνεον, ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναικες **

Then we hear from some child or maiden perhaps, like Ophelia,

"He is dead and gone, lady,
He is dead and gone;
At his head a grass-green turf,
At his heels a stone."

They know they must be patient ; but they cannot choose but weep to think he should be laid in the cold ground. Antonio de Guevara, describing the burial of Christ, the grief of his Mother, and the sorrow of his disciples, represents this mourning in its sublimest and most mysterious form divinely sanctioned and approved. "At length then," he says, "the dead body is buried. Such is the end and sum of this procession, and by how much the way to the sepulchre grew shorter, by so much the more and more their anguish did increase. The grief which the doleful Mother did feel to see her Son put in the grave, and to see the stone put over Him, and to see that she had lost the sight of Him, and to see that He was there without her, and she alone without Him, seeing there is no pen which can write it, I refer to the meditation of the devout soul. There remained Jesus in that cave, covered with that stone, alone without company, anointed with rich ointments, wept by holy men, bound with many cloths, and bathed with many tears."

The ancient Greek and Roman custom of putting on black as significative of mourning for relations was in Christian ages confined to Spain till so late as the twelfth century, as appears from the letters of Peter the Venerable, who speaks of it as being singular in France, and of a Spanish origin. In some countries the usage did not extend to royal families, and in general it was never adopted without limitations. In France parents never assume black on the death of their children, and no where do the lower classes apparel themselves in it wholly. However, with these exceptions the inky cloak and customary suits of solemn black were every where used as the trappings and the suits of woe. As the youth replies to Lady Barnwell, black offended no one's eye-sight, the outward show of mourning was no blemish, nor were sables a disgrace in heraldry.

But now, as usual, let us ask what is the direction supplied by

these latest observations? To which side do they indicate that we should turn? Small is the consolation associated with the mourning of the pagan, who laments the death of some one

“ ———— quem nocte, dieque
Spirat, et in carne vivit complexibus umbræ *.”

Not very different is the grief of him who in the modern world loses the supernatural hope which has its centre in Catholicism. “I have seen death,” says a celebrated author, “enter under the roof of peace and benediction, render it by degrees solitary, shut up one room, then another, which are seen to open no more;” yet if their former peace and blessedness co-existed with Catholicism, you will perceive that very shortly faith dispels this gloom, throws open doors and windows, and introduces into the sorrowful house a healthy luminous air, brighter than ever Homer fancied to reign—κατ’ ἀσφόδελον λειμῶνα. A mother even losing her child does not here cry out, like Hecuba,

* οἶμοι, τὰ πόλλ’ ἀσπάζεσθαι αἱ τ’ ἐμαὶ τροφαὶ
ῥῆνοι τ’ ἐκείνοι φροῦδά μοι †.

She has other thoughts—

“My Lord has need of these flow’rets gay,
The Reaper said, and smiled;
Dear tokens of the earth are they
Where He was once a child.

“And the mother gave, in tears and pain
The flowers she most did love,
She knew she would find them all again
In the fields of light above ‡.”

The language of mourners is now that of St. Paulinus on the death of the boy Celsus,

“Heu ! quid agam ? dubia pendens pietate laboro ;
Gratuler, an doleam ? dignus utroque puer.
Pellite tristitiam, dociles pietate fideli,
Fidentesque Deo lætitiā induite.
Illos infelix luctus decet, et dolor amens,
Nulla quibus superest spes, quia nulla fides §.”

But it will be best perhaps to hear speak some of these mourners ; nor will the time be lost which is spent listening to them. How beautiful are the words of St. Augustin writing to Sapida on the death of her brother ! “Because you do not see him entering and going out as usual, nor hear him speaking, you suffer violence ; and tears burst forth as if the very blood from your

* Sylv. Stat. iv.

† Troad. 1187.

‡ Longfellow.

§ Div. Paulini Epist.

heart—sed sursum sit cor, et sicci erunt oculi*.” You have the same thought thus expressed in an ancient fragment :

πενθεῖν δὲ μετρίως τοὺς προσήκοντας φίλους.
οὐ γὰρ τεθνᾶσιν, ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ὁδὸν,
ἣν πᾶσιν ἔλθειν ἔστ’ ἀναγκαίως ἔχον,
προεληλύθασιν· εἰτά χ’ ἡμεῖς ὕστερον
εἰς ταὐτὸ καταγωγείον αὐτοῖς ἤζομεν,
κοινῇ τὸν ἅλλον συνδιατρίψοντες χρόνον†.

St. Benedict, on hearing the death of St. Placidus, said, “I knew from the first when I received him from his father that my son was mortal. I cannot complain now. I am bound to be thankful, since I have always wished to offer a sacrifice to Almighty God of the fruit of my heart, and I had nothing more precious than this, nothing more lovely, nothing more dear. Placidus chose momentary death for Christ. Above all I give thanks to our Redeemer, and I ought to rejoice for having had such a disciple rather than grieve for having lost him. That was a gift : this is a debt. Why should I grieve that my son Placidus is carried off, when God spared not his own Son for us ? Who is exempt, from the condition of dying, that was not exempt from the condition of being born ? My son Placidus has passed from death to life. He is taken from one to belong to all, never more to be separated from God ‡.” The common society of the world itself, when under the Catholic influence, is conversant with the same thoughts. Louis de Bourbon, receiving the duke of Berry, who came to console him on the death of his son, said, “My lord, I thank you for this kind visit, and for the pity which you have shown for my fair son Louis, who is departed to God. Good blood cannot forget the natural love which unites those who partake of it. Mais, je vous le dis, mon seigneur, cette vie n’est rien qu’une hôtellerie, mais la vie à venir est la propre maison de l’âme immortelle et la seule qui nous rapproche de Dieu §.”

It is not, however, alone observers, mourners, and consolers that Catholicism yields. There is a want more general, of which the sense presses often on those who are departing, and for which, in accordance with the instinctive desire of our nature and the conscience of mankind, the same religion makes provision. It supplies prayers and suppliants for the departed—commemoration holy that unites the living generations with the dead, and which sooner or later opens the eyes of many to see where central truths are taught. As the ocean treats the work of chil-

* Epist. cexlviii.

† Antiphanes, Com. Græc. Frag. ed. Bailey.

‡ Yepes, Chron. Gen. i. ann. 541, § id. 345.

dren on our shores of Ramsgate, Catholicism invades on all sides the intrenchments of sand opposed to it by Protestantism. Reason alone saps round about the frail construction, and then the truth which no man and no society can permanently arrest causes the fabric to crumble away here and there, one moment at this side, another at that; and if one may judge from popular English and American books, which pronounce the views of an intermediate state for the departed to be at once "rational, cheering, encouraging, and beautiful," it is through the attempt to disprove purgatory that its resistless tide is now gushing. "To me," says one popular author, "there appears nothing incomprehensible in this view of the future; on the contrary, it is the only one which I ever found myself capable of conceiving or reconciling with the justice and mercy of our Creator. There must be few who leave this earth fit for heaven; for although the immediate frame of mind in which dissolution takes place is probably very important, it is surely an error, encouraged by jail-chaplains, that a late repentance and a few parting prayers can purify a soul sullied by years of wickedness. How can we imagine that the purity of heaven is to be sullied by an approximation that the purity of earth would forbid? On the other hand, to suppose all such souls lost is too revolting and inconsistent with our ideas of divine goodness to be deliberately accepted. Doubtless there is a middle and progressive state, in which, instead of darkness, the soul will fly to as much light as it can discern. If not, wherefore did Christ go and preach to the spirits in prison? It would have been a mockery to preach salvation to those who had no hope. Nothing is more comprehensible and coherent than this belief in a middle state on which the vast majority of souls enter, a state too in which there are many mansions—not permanent, but progressive. Previously to the reformation the words of the Septuagint respecting this middle state bore their original meaning. It was probably to get rid of the purgatory of the Roman Church, which," continues this author, "had doubtless become the source of corrupt practices, that this doctrine was set aside; besides which, the desire for reformation being alloyed by the odium theologicum, the purifying besom may have taken too discursive a sweep, exercising less modesty and discrimination than might be desirable, and thus wiping away truth and falsehood together*. I meet," concludes this writer, venturing upon dangerous ground, on which no one need follow, "with many instances of apparitions seeking the prayers of the living. If these things occurred merely amongst the Roman Catholics, we might be inclined to suppose they had some connexion with their notion of purgatory; but,

* Crowe, *The Night-side of Nature*.

on the contrary, it is amongst the Lutheran population of Germany that these instances chiefly occurred, inasmuch that it has even been suggested that the omission of prayers for the dead in the Lutheran Church is the cause of the phenomenon. I cannot but think that it would be a great step if mankind could familiarize themselves with the idea that they are spirits incorporated in the flesh, but that the dissolution called death, though it changes the external conditions of the former, leaves its moral state unaltered and progressive, capable of being advanced by the prayers of the living."

An affectionate sense of intercourse with the departed, which flows from central principles, is however one of the first things to depart with faith. "Cur ad mentionem defunctorum," asks Pliny, "testamur memoriam eorum a nobis non sollicitari*?" Paganism, ever at variance with nature, in fact avoided in many cases even naming of the dead, and made use of strange periphrases or conventional synonyms to escape from doing so, as when Cicero, on his return from the execution of the conspirators, perceiving in the forum many of Catiline's accomplices, who were only waiting for the night in hopes of being able to rescue the prisoners, cried out to them with a loud voice, "They did live"—*vixerunt*, a mode of speech among the Romans to avoid the disagreeable and, as it was thought, ominous sound of the word 'dead.' Strabo tells us that the Albanians deem it unholy to think or make mention of the dead—*τιθνηκότων δὲ οὐχ ὕσιον φροντίζειν, οὐδὲ μνησθαι*†. It would seem as if the modern systems opposed to the central faith have caused men to adopt the same thoughts, and to proceed even in regard to customs to greater lengths than the ancients. No one wholly and exclusively influenced by them would even, like Æneas, invoke thrice their departed friends and say,

"Magna manes ter voce vocavi‡;"

or imitate Ulysses, who says, "Nor did we move forwards—

πρὶν τινα τῶν δειλῶν ἐτάρων τρίς ἑκαστον αὔσαι§."

It is affirmed, though of course with smiles, that at a certain college where no Catholic can enter, the Elizabethan mind prevails to such an extent, that, like Henry VIII.'s daughter, they cannot abide the very word death; so that if any stranger in the combination room should be heard to utter it, or to mention the death of any one, or even to use a figurative expression that recalls death, he incurs a fine, which is applied to the purchase of wine for the table. But let such witnesses be dismissed as unheard.

* Plin. N. H. lib. xxviii.

‡ vi. 506.

† Lib. xi.

§ ix. 65.

Pleasantries, of which one should nowhere take advantage, is unsuited here. Without availing ourselves, however, of any unfair evidence, it is pretty clear that in the polite society which has not retained any traditional manners of the old Catholic life it is not usual to make frequent mention of those friends and acquaintances who are departed to their rest. There is something also very cold in the customs and official measures that are followed on the death of great personages who are involved by position in the religious antagonism to antiquity. In the year 1849, for instance, two days after the death of a queen, universally loved and respected, from the council-chamber at Whitehall issued a decree which said, "And it is further ordered that till new editions of the Common Prayer can be had, all persons, vicars, and curates within this realm, do (for the preventing of mistakes) with the pen mark for omission the words 'Adelaide, the Queen Dowager.'" Now this mere scratching out, instead of also adding a name on occasion of death, sounds very strange to Catholic ears. Upon the whole it is evident that in regard to the last scenes of life there is a central attraction for high and low, for sovereigns as well as for subjects. Catholicism follows the custom of the people of God, who prayed, as the Jews still continue to do, for the dead before and at the time of our Saviour, who, while censuring all abuses, past, present, and to come, reproved them not for so doing. But how familiarly are the dead brought back, as it were, among their friends, where the spirit of Christian antiquity is not extinct! "I write this," says Sidonius Apollinaris, "lest perhaps you should think that we cultivated the society only of the living; for we should in your judgment be criminal unless we remembered the life of our departed friends with as much care as that of those whom we have still alive, and unless we were of the number of those who love the dead*." With what affection, too, are they remembered before the divine altars! "When any brother of our congregation dies," say the hermits of Camaldoli, "the priests and clerks are bound to say the whole office of the dead on the spot where he paid the debt of nature†." It is not necessary, as strangers to Catholicity suppose, that men should leave money in order to be prayed for after their deaths. For all who die, whether poor or rich, the Church has prayers, while each family and each circle of friends performs in regard to their departed members the duty which she has prescribed. "I meant not to pry into your secret," says the prior to Siegendorf, "We will pray for one unknown the same as for the best." Sir John Maundeville supposes that even pagans who lived in unavoidable ignorance are not excluded from the benefit of such suffrages; for after observing that God

* Epist. iv. 11.

† Constitut. Erem. Cam. c. 36.

accepted the service of Job, "that was a Paynim, and whom He held for his trewe servaunt," he adds, "and for that ensample whan men seyn De profundis thei seyn it in comoun and in generale with the Cristine pro animabus omnium defunctorum pro quibus sit orandum."

It has been a celebrated question among philosophers whether the dead can return. "*Magnæ impudentiæ est,*" says St. Augustine, "*negare animas identidem e suis sedibus ad nos emitti, cum tot viri sapientes et Deo pleni idipsum ratione et experimento comprobent suo *.*" Be that however as it may, every one who assists at the celebration of the Catholic mysteries with faith and attention may be said to witness a ghost-like procession of departed friends, which, alas! every year lengthens for us all, and which passes rapidly but steadily before the fixed eyes of the spirit at the second memento of the holy mass. "On St. Cecilia's day," says Mathieu Paris, "Henry III. came to St. Albans, and stopped three days in the abbey. During his stay messengers came to announce the death of Walter Cumin, a powerful Scotch earl, by his horse having fallen; and another messenger came soon after to say that John, son of Geoffroi, had gone the way of all creatures near Guilford. The king, before his departure, had a solemn mass celebrated in the abbey for the soul of John †." Similarly we read of Charles V. at St. Yuste, that whenever any of his friends had died he was punctual in causing masses of requiem to be sung by the friars; that he had continually masses said for the souls of his father, mother, and wife; and that on his journey from the coast he privately sent one of his chaplains to Tordesillas to observe the service of the chapel which he had endowed there for the souls of his parents ‡. The spirit of this devotion is free and common to all men; for though indigence may prevent its external manifestation, it renders no one incapable of discharging this duty. But what are sable hangings and the pomps of a grand solemnity to the secret effusion of a loyal heart? Here again, therefore, we are brought back to a memory of love, and of its tenderness, and presented with an occasion for observing what an affinity exists between it and the central doctrines; for here kneel those also who weep like Isabella, as described in the incomparable poem of Keats:—

"It was a vision. In the drowsy gloom,
The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
Lorenzo stood and wept: the forest tomb
Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot

* Lib. de Cura pro Mortuis.

† Ad ann. 1258.

‡ Stirling's Cloister Life of Charles V.

Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
 Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
 From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears
 Had made a miry channel for his tears.

"Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake ;
 For there was striving in his piteous tongue
 To speak as when on earth it was awake,
 And Isabella on its music hung :
 Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,
 As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung ;
 And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,
 Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

"Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
 With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof
 From the poor girl by magic of their light,
 The while it did unthread the horrid woof
 Of the late darken'd time—the murderous spite
 Of pride and avarice—the dark pine roof
 Of the forest—and the sodden turfed dell
 Where, without any words, from stabs he fell.

"Saying, moreover, ' Isabel, my sweet !
 Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
 And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet ;
 Around me beeches and high chesnuts shed
 Their leaves and prickly nuts ; a sheep-fold bleat
 Comes from beyond the river to my bed :
 Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
 And it shall comfort me within the tomb.'"

These tears of women accompanied with prayer were believed
 to be all-powerful in regard to those who pass through sufferings to

"The fair fields where loves eternal dwell,"

and therefore our old poet, alluding to their state, says, passing
 indeed beyond the strict limits of divinity, but not assuredly
 flying in opposition to its spirit,

"Hark and beware ! unless thou hast loved, ever
 Beloved again, thou shalt see those joys never.
 Hark, how they groan that died despairing !
 Oh, take heed then !
 Hark how they howl for over-daring !
 All these were men.
 They that be fools and die for fame,
 They lose their name ;
 And they that bleed,
 Hark how they speed !
 Now in cold frosts, now scorching fires
 They sit, and curse their lost desires :

Nor shall these souls be free from pains and fears,
Till women waft them over in their tears."

It is not strange that Catholicism should yield such themes as Isabella's fate, when we know that it provides a tear with supplications even for an enemy. When news of the death of Ranulf, earl of Chester, at Wallingford, came to Hubert de Bourg, and they told him that one of his greatest enemies had died, he sighed deeply, and said, "May the Lord have pity on him! He was my man by putting his hands within mine. Yet he never served me when he could injure me." Then he took up a psalter, and kneeling before the altar of the chapel in which, though in sanctuary, he was besieged by the king, he read the holy book from beginning to end, praying piously for Ranulf's soul*. Judging from history alone, it is evident that Catholicism impresses men with a strong sense of duty in regard to a memory of the dead generally associated with prayer. A curious instance fraught with the old simplicity is given in the *Magnum Speculum*. "A certain knight," says its author, "retained in all his actions such pious solicitude for the departed, that he had made a law to himself never to pass a church without standing with his face turned towards the east, and saying a pater noster for the souls of the faithful. On one occasion, his enemies laying snares for him, he saw himself near being surrounded, and found that he could only escape death by flight. As he fled he chanced to pass the wall of a cemetery, and having no other means of escape he leaped over it; but notwithstanding all his haste and alarm while crossing it, he remembered his custom, which he decided on observing, though he were to perish on the graves over which he prayed; so stopping and turning to the east, he prayed with so much the more fervour as he believed it was for the last time. The enemies came upon him, and seeing him thus stand were stupified. It is added that at the same moment, thinking that they beheld a vision of armed men appearing around him, they fled in the utmost consternation, leaving him after his prayer to regain his home in safety †."

Every one knows that the doctrinal foundation of this practice, existing from all antiquity in the Eastern as well as in the Western Church, has been taken away by the modern guides, who unfortunately may be said, without infringing truth, to be graduates in the unamiable science of reducing to a system insensibility and oblivion in regard to the dead. It is, however, observable that a sense of inconsistency, and of wanting some opinion to sustain the natural effusions of their own hearts, occasionally seems to press upon those who are placed by circum-

* Ad ann. 1232.

† p. 193.

stances under their direction ; for how readily are their tongues found to utter such sentences as

“ ——— plain, well-meaning soul !
Whom fair befall in heaven 'mongst happy souls ! ”

Even as we pass now under these mourning boughs, do we not hear the popular voice of England singing of our late illustrious warrior such lines as

“ Doubtless he owned to sins and wrongs,
Like all beside that live ;
Yet unto us his good belongs :
His ill may God forgive * ? ”

The street literature is an index of the popular sentiment. It must be such, we are told, as the patterers or street songsters approve of, and such as the street buyers will buy †. We find on this occasion not only sanctioning, but offering prayer for the dead ; for in another of these pieces, composed for the people by some humble poet who consults their hearts, and what nature all the world over recognizes instinctively as true, rather than Lambeth, we find these lines :

“ In glory and fame he'll no more march again,
Our noble old Duke, God rest him !
He has gone to that home whence he'll never return,
Our gallant old Duke, God rest him ! ”

The truth is, that the Catholic doctrine on this point agrees with one of the instinctive beliefs of man. “ Although,” to use the words of a philosopher, “ in high states of civilization individuals may be found possessing warped and inert spiritualities, just as highly pampered hounds lose their instincts, who profess to be superior to the spiritual law of their nature ; yet with the generality of men nature will assert her sway, and they possess an instinctive tendency to believe that the dead should be prayed for, whenever that great doctrine is proposed to them.” There is no reasoning required, no proofs demanded, no inquiry made, no desire of explanation ; the instant that the announcement reaches the mind, that same instant it is received. The heart and mind, therefore, by responding naturally to the Catholic doctrine which provides prayer for the dying and the dead, find an issue even amidst these last scenes of life to the centre. They will be moved by such remonstrances as were addressed by the Strasburg theologian to one of the chief magistrates of that

* Martin Tupper.

† Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor.

city, saying to him, "If you remain separated, you will be abandoned after your death; and when you are no longer seen, men will no longer think of you. The universal practice of the primitive Church will cease in regard to you." They will reflect on this, and say, "Those who separate themselves from the chair of unity, whatever poetry may demand, will not pray for us; and if we remain separated, those who hold to it cannot pray for us in a public commemoration, and even secretly cannot feel strongly impelled to make us the object of a solicitude which we seem by anticipation to have rejected." Ives de Chartres says that "the living cannot have communion with the dead, with whom, while they lived, the others had no communion, for the Church can only bind and loose what is on earth; and that to the divine judgment, therefore, must be referred all things which have not been terminated during life by human judgment*." The same admonition is conveyed, though in a less direct manner, by the Church herself, when she prays, in her solemn office after mass for the dead, that the departed may find mercy, using, but no doubt without anticipating a literal or narrow interpretation, these impressive words, which the occasion only, and not any exceptionless dogma, seems naturally to suggest to her: "*Ut sicut hic eum vera fides junxit fidelium turmis, ita eum illic tua miseratio societ choris angelicis†.*" Probably not a few men have been in the end induced by such considerations to seek their ancient mother; judging that she must be the true mother who has such tender care for them in their last moments, who salutes with fragrant incense even their poor inanimate remains, who pays the same symbolical honours to their grave, seeking to encompass it with respect and even beauty, while, in solicitude for their departed soul, she has tears for the term that nature dictates, and prayers and sacrifice for ever. Late, though still in time, comes then the pain of truth to whom it is pain; betraying by such a feeling their last folly, and oh, what folly!

"For to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty."

The ancient mother thus receives every day the tardy homage of the dying, who say to those whom she commissions,

"A cloudy mist of ignorance, equal to
Cimmerian darkness, would not let me see then,
What now with adoration and wonder,

* Iv. Carnot. Epist. 96.

† De Off. Solemni post Miss. pro Defunctis.

With reverence I look up to : direct me,
 Ye heavenly ministers : inform my knowledge
 In the strict course that may preserve me happy,
 Whilst yet my sighs suck in th' unwilling air
 That swells my wasted lungs. Though not in life,
 In death I will be thine."

In fine, providing for the last wants of the body, Catholicism supplies men with a decorous burial, and, wherever it is possible, with an inviolable grave. Now, like the sensitive plant as described by the poet, methinks we feel the sound of the funeral chant,

"And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
 And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low."

Cicero speaks of funerals where robbers and spoilers preying on the dead, rather than friends sympathizing, attended—funeral, indeed! he exclaims, "si funus id habendum sit, quo non amici conveniunt ad exsequias cohonestandas, sed bonorum emptores ut carnifices ad reliquias vitæ lacerandas et distrahendas*." We, too, on occasions of burial call about us a set of officious mechanics of all sorts, who, as a late writer says, "are counting their shillings, as it were, by the tears that we shed, and watching with jealousy every candle's end of their perquisites;" but Catholicism seeks to obviate such evils. It collects the friends of the deceased, as in all countries where its customs last; for to seek privacy would be to diminish supplicants; and therefore those who in life were hidden are followed by many to their graves, as when the Queen Mary de Medicis, with many princesses and great ladies of the court, assisted at the interment of Sister Anne des Anges, a Carmelite nun; but in general it inspires men with aversion for expensive obsequies, and makes them desire, like the noble Queen Eleanor, dowager of France and Portugal, and sister of the Emperor Charles V., that their interment should be simple, and that the money which more sumptuous obsequies would cost should be given to the poor.

"————— Adsint
 Plebei parvæ funeris exsequiæ,"

is the wish of the poet for himself †, which most persons influenced by central principles would express as their own. Nero burned in one day, at the funeral of Poppæa, more odoriferous spices than Arabia Felix produces in a year. Catholicism renders men apt to dislike and abhor such extravagance. It even not uncommonly inspires words like those of Menaphon, in the Lover's Melancholy,

* Pro Quintio.

† Propert. iii.

"————— When I am dead,
 Save charge ; let me be buried in a nook ;
 No plumes, no pompous whining : these are fooleries.
 If, whilst we live, we stalk about the streets
 Jostled by carmen, foot-boys, and fine lads
 In silken coats, unminded, and scarce thought on,
 It is not comely to be haled to the earth
 Like high-fed jades upon a tilting-day,
 In antic trappings. Scorn to useless tears !"

The general of the Jesuits is entitled to no high funeral office ; it is only a low mass which is said for him, as for the poorest of the common people. The Archduchess Mary of Austria ordered that her body should be buried by night, with only a few assistants and only one or two torches, in the church of St. Clare ; so that her contempt of the world might be manifested even in the funeral*.

At the same time, there is no such master as Catholicism for teaching the art of showing with true magnificence respect to the dead who are entitled by general opinion to peculiar honours ; and to whom, for the sake of the living, it is sometimes wise to pay them. Allusion has been just made to the death of the illustrious warrior whom our whole nation sought to honour at his obsequies. May one be pardoned for returning to the subject, in order to observe how natural it is to refer to the Catholic Church at such a moment to ask for precedents and rules respecting such a ceremony, when men's hearts are set upon having it produced in the highest perfection ? For, after all, mere mortuary hangings and triumphal cars, lighted tapers, inspiring, as we are told, "great satisfaction in the spectators," and the long train of noble mourners, who have nothing to do but to evince the dejected behaviour of the visage, together with all forms, modes, and shows of grief, as if with veiled lids seeking for him they loved and honoured in the dust, signify but little, when the idea that would have given eloquence to all these things is gone with the prayer which they were only intended to assist or to signify. The multitude, instinctively guided in its taste towards truth, seems to look on all sides in hopes of discovering some trace of that religious symbolism which speaks to the heart. But in vain. All is cold, stately, official. As is remarked by a contemporary, Pericles or Scipio might have been borne along in the same manner. So it is also when a poet dies. Like Orpheus of Thrace, the Muses may bury him with his golden lyre, but many reflect how much more to the purpose it would be to hear sung "requiem æternam." Truly it is on these occasions that the noblest and most illus-

trious nations officially separated from Catholicism may, for reasons even of dignity and taste alone, envy the most humble that are possessed of its consolations and inheritors of its genius. What is all the magnificence of a state pageant, if compared with the office of the dead? How solemn would sound under the dome of St. Paul's, where our great duke is laid to rest, the nocturns and psalms, the antiphons and prose, of that high-inspired, matchless lamentation! How impressive would it be to hear the vested priest, in allusion to him, sing "*Breves dies hominis sunt; numerus mensium ejus apud te est. Constituisti terminos ejus, qui præteriri non poterunt!*" "Popery, it must be owned," says Dr. Johnson, "is a religion of external appearance sufficiently attractive." We are observing an instance which verifies his words. But why limit its advantages to what is external? Surely the utterance of such prayers is accompanied with an internal act, and with consequences, though invisible to human eyes, which render so reserved a eulogy unjust.

During the middle ages the funerals of eminent and holy men were often, owing to popular reverence, great public events, which were commemorated ever afterwards by the erection of crosses or chapels where the bearers rested. Thus in a spot of wild grandeur amidst pines and torrents near the cascade of Bonnant, between Mont Blanc and the Col du Bonhomme, was a chapel under the invocation of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, on the spot where the Gauls and people of Auxerre, in solemn procession, met the Italians escorting the remains of St. Germain, who had died at Ravenna, and who had desired to be buried in his native land. Exact details respecting such ceremonies used to be taken into grave histories, as in the instance of the funeral of St. Hugues of Lincoln. When Maria de Escobar died, Don Francis de Vinjuela wrote a long letter describing her obsequies to Don Louis of Castilia, assessor of the Council of Granada and governor of Gupuzcoa*. "As soon as she was dead, the whole population of Valladolid flocked to the house where her body lay; and as the house was small and old, so as to be insecure when overcrowded, it was necessary to order out guards immediately to prevent more than a certain number from entering at a time. The vice-governor and all the authorities, the nobility and the poor, all testified the same respect and devotion; and though the rain fell in torrents, the multitude never left the open square, but waited day and night. The funeral obsequies were appointed to occupy nine days, with solemn offices and sermons each day. Such were the honours paid after death to one who had wished to lie hidden in life through a religious motive†."

* Vita ejus, P. ii. lib. iii. c. 3.

† ii. iii. 2.

It cannot be denied, however, that even for common persons, Catholicism, where its influence is widely felt, provides a respectful and even imposing burial, midst tapers, and floating odours, and music soft and majestic. Though the ancestors of the deceased, represented by living men with waxen masks, no longer walk before the corpse, as in Roman times, when the whole line of progenitors, along with collateral branches, swept along in front of the body, there are not wanting heraldic images to proclaim the family, and sacred symbols to recall faith and honour, when Catholics are paying those tragic duties to the dead which become piety and love. At the funeral of Michael Angelo were represented in painting all his illustrious predecessors in art from Cimabue downward. His own portrait was displayed, as were also the principal events in his life. A figure of death appeared, lamenting that he had robbed the world of such a man; it held a tablet with these words, "*coegit dura necessitas.*" There was also a female figure representing Christian love; for, says the admiring disciple who records the ceremony, "this being made up of religious and every other excellence, being no less than an aggregate of all those qualities which we call the cardinal, and the pagans the moral virtues, was thus appropriately displayed at his obsequies, since it beseems Christians to celebrate those qualities, without which all other ornaments of body and mind are as nothing."

In general it is worthy of remark that Catholicism, without incurring expense, seeks to invest even burial rites with a certain beauty. At Florence it was the custom, at the funerals of the nobility, to carry before the bier a range of small banners affixed to some devout picture, which used to be left as a present to the Church, and in perpetuation of the memory of the deceased and the family. Thus, for the burial of one gentleman, we read that the celebrated artist Jacopo da Pontormo painted twenty-four banners, on each of which was a figure of our Lady with the divine Child, and on two of them a figure of the patron saint of the deceased. On all these occasions, and not less so when the poor are buried, nothing hideous or revolting is permitted to appear. We read of the great artist, Baldassare Peruzzi of Sienna, having painted an exceedingly beautiful bier for the removal of the common dead to the place of their burial. Domenico Beccafumi employed his genius in the same way for the two burial confraternities of Santa Lucia and Sant' Antonio. "Nor let any one marvel," says an old historian of painters, "that I should mention works of this character, since these are, in fact, beautiful to a miracle, as all who have seen them can bear witness." The beautiful bier which Giovan Antonio Razzi painted for a burial confraternity in Sienna may still be seen in the church of the Laical Brotherhood of San Giovanni and San

Gennaro; and all this latter decoration, we must remember, was for the burial of the indigent. In general the lovely forms of children in white veils are employed to grace the funerals of the young, on whose coffins are strewed chaplets of sweet flowers, Catholicism in every case favouring eminently the general principle of cheap beauty opposed to expensive horrors, though for the burial of persons of high quality, of course, it sometimes provides a suitable and costly solemnity. How grand is that scene described by Cervantes, when his knight and squire, travelling in darkness, see all of a sudden advancing towards them a great number of lights, resembling so many moving stars! Soon after, we read, they perceived about twenty persons in white robes, all on horseback, with lighted torches in their hands, behind whom came a litter covered with black, which was followed by six persons in deep mourning; and the mules they rode on were covered likewise with black down to their heels; and those in white came muttering to themselves in a low and plaintive tone. This was the funeral of a gentleman who died in Baerza, which was proceeding to Segovia, where he was born, and where he wished to be buried. All this, no doubt, involved expenses; but it ill becomes the frivolous to find fault, when we find the grave Mabillon writing to Magliabechi, and saying, "I am grateful to those who have procured such solemn obsequies for the good Signor Mazzi, who loved literature, and who enriched the public with productions of his mind. It is just that the loss of so good a man should be marked with regrets*."

But lo! the gate of the cemetery and the cypress groves! It is here that the road terminates; we shall now see the tombs from which it derives its name. Here are those, Homer would say, whom the life-producing earth holds down. What care, what solicitude seems to reign in human breasts, having regard even to these last mansions! It is that there are wants beyond life itself. "To man alone of all animals is given," says Pliny, "the care of sepulture—*uni sepulturæ cura.*" The Christian religion, in committing human bodies to the earth, only consecrated the ancient and primitive practice of mankind. "At Rome," says Pliny, "wars, sparing not even the dead, caused the ancient mode of burial in the ground to be changed for burning, though some families never adopted the new rite. No one of the Cornelian house was burned before the dictatorship of Scylla†." Young children, however, were never burnt, but always inhumed.

Sophists, who would dig turfs out of a maiden's grave to feed

* Correspondance, &c., tom. ii. let. excii.

† Nat. Hist. lib. vii. 55.

their larks, and fabricate dice out of their father's bones to make him participate in their crime, affect to ridicule the importance attached by men generally to the attainment of a grave. Those whom they loved, if such men can be said to love any one, may lie unburied at any cross road for aught they care; they are not like Tancred, who cannot achieve the enterprise of the enchanted forest because his dead mistress seems to come out of one of the trees. Without such perversity, but by mere dint of neglecting all reverence, many officials, in places where Catholicism is unknown, seem to adopt the opinion of the greedy, avaricious Nabatæi in Arabia, who, as Strabo says, regard the bodies of the dead as only fit for the dunghill; following Heraclitus, who said that they should only be thrown out as so much filth, so that even the dead bodies of their kings are committed to the scavengers*. The voice of mankind in general would never sanction such barbarism, which is condemned by the sacred Scriptures, in which are commemorated many examples to recommend and confirm the primeval sentiment of respect for the dead. Thus we read that when the son of Tobias had gone, returning he told his father that one of the children of Israel lay slain in the street, and that he forthwith leaped up from his place at the table and left his dinner, and came fasting to the body; and taking it up privately, when the sun was down went and buried him†. All the primitive traditions of the world attest the universality of this sentiment. According to Plato, to assist at the obsequies of the dead, and to respect their sepulchres, is to fulfil the third part of justice. Hence funeral rites were called τὰ δίκαια, νόμιμα, as among the Romans "justa facere." The act of Kreon was a public crime, an offence to Heaven and to men. Catholicism not only inspires the same feeling, but it secures, as far as it has power, for all men the same benefit. "The first among clerks," said the primitive Christians, "is the order of grave-diggers—fossarium ordo—who, after the example of holy Tobias, are admonished to bury the dead, that from the care of visible they may hasten to that of invisible things—et resurrectionem carnis credentes in Domino, totum quod faciunt Deo se præstare, non mortuis cognoscant‡." In later times to bury the dead, as one of the works of mercy, was the office of many confraternities, the greatest men belonging to them. Lopez de Vega, as member of the congregation of priests confined to those who were born at Madrid, used to acquit himself of all its duties, we are told, with devotion, one of its obligations being to accompany the dead to their graves. Once he expressed a wish to bury the corpse

* Lib. xvi.

† Tobias 2.

‡ De Sept. Gradib. Eccles. inter Opera S. Hieron.

with his own hands. The assistants desired to spare his old age from such an office, but he persisted. Laying aside his ecclesiastical cloak, he went into the grave to receive the body, placed it down, and then covered it with earth.

To provide ground for the dead, instead of being a money speculation as at present, a last but most useful resource, is with those who are under the influence of Catholicism a work of charity. To purchase a cemetery for Christians was one of the causes which justified the sale of the sacred vessels of the Church, to relieve the poor from famine and to redeem captives being the other two cases required by the Fathers*. Stowe relates, that in the year 1349 Sir Walter Manny "purchased thirteen acres and a rod of ground adjoining to No Man's Land, and lying in a place called Spittle-cross, because it belonged to St. Bartilmewe's hospital, since that called the New Church haw, and caused it to be consecrated by the bishop of London to the use of burials. In consideration of the number of Christian people here buried, the said Sir Walter Manny caused first a chapel to be built, where for the space of twenty-three years offerings were made; and it is to be noted, that above one hundred thousand bodies of Christian people had in that churchyard been buried; for the said knight had purchased that place for the burial of poor people, travellers, and other that were deceased, to remain for ever; whereupon an order was taken for the avoiding of contention; to wit, that the bodies should be had unto the church where they were parishioners, or died, and, after the funeral service done, had to the place where they should be buried. And in the year 1371 he caused there to be founded a house of Carthusian monks, which he willed to be called the Salutation, and that one of the monks should be called prior; and he gave them the said place of thirteen acres and a rod of land, with the chapel and houses there built, for their habitation." In this respect the poor, at least, may be attracted to central principles by observing the care that emanates from them in regard to their sepulture, which both in pagan and modern times seems, where they are opposed, not unfrequently more a deception than a reality. At Athens, indeed, we are told that each dead man had a separate grave; but the multitude of the slaves formed an exception; and it would have been as difficult to find their graves at Rome, where even the poorer citizens were deprived of decent burial. "Generals deceive our soldiers," said Tiberius Gracchus, "when they exhort them to combat for their tombs and temples. Amongst that multitude of Romans, is there one who has an ancestral tomb or a domestic altar? They have not so much earth as would supply them with

* St. Ambrose, i. Off. c. 28.

a grave." The puticolæ of pagan Rome were in the Esquiline fields, and it was there that the bodies of the common dead were thrown promiscuously. The Church from the beginning rejected all distinctions in this respect, treating the bodies of the poor and rich with equal respect; but in later times, in some places shorn of her material power, in others secretly or openly opposed by many influences, she has beheld, without being able to resist it, usages which look like a return to the old barbarity; for the state, the company, the union, or some other corporate power, sends the poor to unknown burial; and so they all depart, unrespected, unattended, unprayed for, passing by one and one to pale oblivion. Each of these unfortunates gone to their death gives occasion to witness the scene described by the poet who so deeply sympathized with our English poor :

"They rattle his bones fast over the stones,
It's only a pauper, whom nobody owns."

The spectator who belongs to the same class, so that he can say, like Menippus to the ferryman, *οὐκ ἂν λάβοις παρὰ τοῦ μὴ ἔχοντος*, will naturally shudder when he mournfully reflects upon what is reserved for himself, demanding what spot will deign to receive one day his own dust. Alas! the Catholic Church, when thus oppressed, knows not on these occasions what to answer, unless it be in the words of an old poet, saying,

"——— But there is a payment
Belongs to goodness from the great exchequer
Above; it will not fail thee, my poor child,
Be that thy comfort."

To bury the common dead τὸν Πανελλήνων νόμον σώζων, as the old poet says, or what would be more to the purpose, adhering to the ancient Christian practice respecting them, seems now too often a thing merely pretended. Your grave-digger no more builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter; the houses that he makes do not last till doomsday. Indeed, since the practical renouncement of the old Christian feelings in regard of sepulture, no class in the large English towns has witnessed any consistent respect shown to the bodies of its dead. That reverential treatment of the remains of man, as ancient as humanity itself, seemed in many places to be handed down in these latter ages by Catholicism alone. In London the parochial officers knew of the hideous practice which prevailed to such an extent, of mutilating the dead immediately after burial in order to procure space, and of making a profit of the coffins and their decorations. "The ministers," we are told by their friends, "connived at it, and the legislature may be said to

have sanctioned it." With respect to the poor, the inviolability of their graves is not better secured by the arrangements of the rationalist civilization on the Continent; for the city now will say, Let the earth cover them for five years. Theseus passed a more humane decree,

*ἰάσας' ἥδη γῆ καλυφθῆναι περὺς.
ὅθεν δ' ἕκαστον ἐς τὸ σῶμα' οὐκίκετο,
ἐνταῦθ' ἀπῆλθε, πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα,
τὸ σῶμα δ' ἐς γῆν*.*

"Where," demands Adrastus, "are the remainder of the dead, the common dead? Buried in the valleys of Clitheron? On what side? Who gave them burial? Theseus placed them near the shadowy rock of Eleutheri†." The modern legislatures, so far as they are opposed to Catholicism, are not much concerned about finding a shadowy rock for the poor who cannot pay the tariff to secure a quiet and inviolable grave; but the Church, while she had power, treated with great respect and tenderness the remains of the common people. "Non licet," she said in solemn council, "mortuum super mortuum mitti‡." Regino, abbot of Prum, in the ninth century, citing the authority of Pope St. Gregory, says, "Grievous is the act and alien from all sacerdotal office to seek price from the earth allotted to corruption, and to make a profit of another's sorrow. This vice we never permitted, remembering that when Abraham demanded the price of the sepulchre for his wife, the owner refused to accept any remuneration. If, then, a pagan man was unwilling to derive profit from a dead body, how much more ought we priests to shrink from such a thing? If, however, the parents or heirs should voluntarily offer lights, we do not object; but we forbid any sum to be required, lest the Church should seem venal, or you to seek advantage from the death of men§." We should remark, before proceeding further, that Catholicism has inherited and consecrated that ancient respect, even for the outward tombs and for whatever appertains to the graves of the dead in general, which modern religious influences and philosophy have been powerless to preserve where they have not even openly opposed it. Cicero expresses the sentiment of his times in affirming that the monument only becomes more venerable by its antiquity: "Statue intereunt tempestate, vi. vetustate; sepulcrorum autem sanctitas in ipso solo est; quod nulla vi moveri neque deleri potest. Atque, ut cetera exstinguuntur,

* Iph. in Aul. 530.

† 759.

‡ Concil. Antisiodorensis, Can. xv. ann. MIV.

§ Regino, Abb. Prum., De Eccles. Disciplin. lib. i. 78.

sic sepulcra sunt sanctiora vetustate*.” No one needs to be told how the disciples of Luther and Voltaire, though in most respects at variance, agreed at least in the one point of setting at nought all such notions as these. Catholicism, however, adverse to all exaggeration, has proved on the other hand, even during the middle ages, that it could distinguish a reasonable and pious respect from a superstitious fear in regard to sepulchres; for when the public interest required such a measure, it made no difficulty in sanctioning a respectful transfer of the remains and tombs of former generations from one place to another, so that it involved a different spirit altogether from that of which Pausanias gives an instance, where he says that the citizens of Libethra, having been warned against the day when the tomb of Orpheus should no longer cover his body, and some shepherds, crowding round it to hear one of their comrades sing his verses, having overthrown the column, which caused the urn which it supported to fall and be broken, so that the sun saw the bones of Orpheus, believed that the overthrow of their city that night by a storm was in punishment for that outrage†. Such superstition belonged not to Catholicism; but undoubtedly it would have resisted the inhuman profanation of graves, against which Shakspeare is said to have sought a refuge by his epitaph, and which has left Europe almost without any ancient sepulchres, excepting those contained in museums, or such as have been reconstructed through attachment to the arts after their precious freight had been burnt or scattered to the winds.

Central principles, in regard to the respect which they inspire for graves, may be studied in “the subterraneous heaven of Rome,” as Arringhi calls the catacombs—in the yard of parishes, which long enjoyed the right of asylum, the gates being consecrated with the relics of saints‡, and where each church, as Gerbet says, “watches over its dead, or, to use the expression of St. Paul, its sleepers,” as a mother watches over her child in the cradle; and, in fine, in the ancient and modern cemeteries, where

“—— As at Pola, near Quarnaro’s gulf,
That closes Italy and laves her bounds,
The place is all thick spread with sepulchres§.”

Dante in these lines refers to that celebrated cemetery of the Elysian Fields of Arles called Eliscamp, without the city, upon an eminence, where pagan and Christian tombs have been crowded together for ages, the former sepulchres having been protected by the sacerdotal authority, as when Gaspar du

* Phil. ix.

† Lib. ix.

‡ Bib. de l’Ecole des Chartes, iv. 580.

§ Hell.

Laurens, archbishop of Arles, excommunicated those zealots who should dare to break the pagan tombs, lamps, and lachrymatories with which these graves in Eliscamp were furnished; the lamps being thought, according to a poetic fancy, to burn perpetually, in token of the pagan belief in the immortality of the soul*. This was the spot in which Constantine was said to have seen the cross in the air, as Nicephorus relates, in memory of which the Laborum is represented on many of these tombs. Michael de Morieres, archbishop of Arles, and Gervais de Tilbury, the Englishman who was mareschal of the kingdom of Arles, say that Eliscamp was so celebrated throughout the world, that all Christians desired to be buried there; and in the church of St. Severin, at Bordeaux, was an inscription on an ancient stone attesting this fact. Many of the paladins who had died in the Holy Land were buried here. In this solemn field lie kings, princes, governors of provinces, generals of armies, and great noblemen. Turpin says that Charlemagne caused to be buried here those who fell at Roncevaux, amongst whom were Astolphe, count of Langres, Sanson, general of the Burgundians, Arlant of Berlant, and Estamat Athon. Here lay also St. Trophime, and his successors, St. Honorat, St. Hilary, St. Concorde, St. Aurelien, St. Eonius and Virgile, St. Rotland, and others†.

It is an ancient sentiment of humanity, though ridiculed by sophists in all ages, which induces men to prefer some particular place for their own interment, and in general to wish that their remains may be placed near the just, or in the neighbourhood of those to whom they were themselves once known. Fulbert of Chartres deems that Solomon was saved merely from observing that he was buried among the kings of Israel, which was a privilege denied to reprobate kings who maintained their perverse will to the last‡. "When a man has travelled in his youth," says Chateaubriand, "and passed many years out of his country, he grows accustomed to place death every where. In traversing the seas of Greece, it seemed to me that all the monuments which I perceived upon the promontories were hostelries, where a bed was prepared for myself." And yet, in regard to a grave, it is not perhaps quite natural for men to be such cosmopolites. The circumstance of one's bones lying utterly undistinguished where no one that ever passes will have any memory or knowledge of him whose spirit has again to be associated with what reposes beneath the earth, rather seems to add to the misfortune of dying *φίλης ἀπὸ πατρίδος αἰης*. There is a charm which attracts us to the place where sleep our former friends and companions with whom we played as youths, studied as scholars,

* Du Port, Hist. de l'Eglise d'Arles. † 71. ‡ Epist. lxxxi.

acted as men. The heathen Æneas felt this attraction, and exclaimed,

“—— An sit mihi gratior ulla
Quove magis fessas optem demittere naves,
Quam quæ Dardanum tellus mihi servat Acceten,
Et patris Anchise gremio complectitur ossa *?”

All Christian antiquity recognized the force of the same sentiment, by which, no doubt, many are still moved.

“’Tis little ; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest,
And in the places of his youth.”

“Formerly,” says a French writer, “men knew where they were born, and they knew where was their tomb.” Penetrating into the forest, they could say,

“Beaux arbres qui m’avez vu naître,
Bientôt vous me verrez mourir.”

Formerly, too, every one desired to know where were buried those whose memory was dear to him. Inspired by that sentiment, our contemporary Charles Swain represents a youth saying to a mysterious stranger, “I have one only wish on earth—it is to see my mother’s grave, to kneel upon it.” To whom the gipsy answers, “I know thy mother’s grave! Now would’st thou to it ?

‘But one besides myself can show it thee,
And when we die ——
All knowledge of her burial-place dies too !
Thine eyes will never gaze with filial love
Upon that hallowed mould.’”

When the youth, though terrified by the dark, reprobate look of such a guide, exclaims,

“Take me! do what thou wilt!
Show me my mother’s grave.”

Dying persons would charge their friends to visit the spot where they were to be buried. So the Friar, in the Lovers’ Progress, relating to Lidian the death of Clarange, says,

“———— And of me
He did desire, bathing my hand with tears,
That with my best care I should seek and find you,
And from his dying mouth prevail so with you,
That you awhile should leave your hermit’s strictness,
And on his monument pay a tear or two,
To witness how you loved him.”

When that true friend answers,

“ ———— Oh, my heart!

To witness how I loved him! Would he had not
Led me unto his grave, but sacrificed
His sorrows upon mine! He was my friend,
My noble friend; I will bewail his ashes.
His fortunes and poor mine were born together,
And I will weep 'em both; I will kneel by him,
And on his hallowed earth do my last duties;
I'll gather all the pride of spring to deck him;
Woodbines shall grow upon his honoured grave,
And, as they prosper, clasp to show our friendship.”

Thus were dead friends bewailed, and all domestic bonds perpetuated with the affections and duties that resulted from them. “Every family,” says Gerbet, “worthy of the name, venerates the resting-place of its fathers. Woe to a family if the passion for enjoyment extinguishes this sentiment—if the exchange or the racecourse makes it forget its old tombs!” The Church has always favoured such respect. Catholicism would preserve the sepulchres even after the families that used them were extinct. The ancestral tomb could still be seen, though the marble contained only pale ashes, while the ebony pillars that so many years sustained their titles seemed ready to shake and sink beneath them. Despotism in modern as in ancient times has set this sentiment at nought, or even employed it to perpetrate cruelty beyond the grave. Napoleon, who caused the deaths of many men, “would not,” says a great writer, “have thought that he had done with them, if he had left them the choice of their tomb. In this instance he had not done with them yet, and so he refused it.”

But let us walk on and wind our way between these monuments, some only discoverable to the affection of lowly visitors, guided to them by love; others perhaps of memorable fame, built by the curious thoughts of noble minds, in which sleep those who possessed valiant souls. Oh, what a solemn place is this, and yet how beautiful! It seems made for pleasure, not for death.

“ ———— Thou dark grove

That hast been call'd the seat of melancholy,
And shelter for the discontented spirits.
Sure thou art wrong'd: thou seem'st to me a place
Of solace and content; a paradise,
That giv'st me more than ever court could do,
Or richest palace. Blest be thy fair shades,
Let birds of music ever chant it here!”

Hither the forest seems to send such of its children as seem to sympathize with man. The weeping birch and willow mix with

the ever-green oaks, laurels, and sweet bays; while round and between the tombs stand cypresses, which "cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies, and with their innoxious shadows the bright marble;" innoxious, since, as an old poet observes, "These pyramidal trees injure the least of any by their dropping." The cypress, which yields a crown for the urn of your child, points to the heaven where his spirit lives. "The cypress," says Pliny, "is a stranger and difficult of growth,—*natu morosa, fructu supervacua, baccis torva, folio amara, odore violenta, ac ne umbra quidem gratioſa, Diti sacra, et ideo funebri signo ad domos posita* *." The naturalist, however, in this passage overlooks the only properties which render it suitable to the Christian necropolis—its durability and its spire, symbolical of a life that lasts for ever in the realms above. But see how many flowers bloom over these graves! The ancients used to say that those who died young were changed into flowers. When the earth receives some sweet and lovely form, framed in the prodigality of nature, these fragile beauties of an hour seem to be in truth a fitting emblem of its fate; for, as the Fernando of Calderon says to Fenix, in the garden of the Moor, "these flowers, born with the Aurora, appear to die with the day." The flower of the common dandelion lives two days and a half. On the first two days it is expanded in the day, and shuts at night; but on the third day it closes about noon, and this closing is followed by the death of the corolla. Flowers are associated with tender memories; they are the language of our valentines, which every year come out with the earliest, decking our streets with beauty. How wistfully does that stranger look upon the primrose near the grave, as if

"Lamenting love's bereavement
With secret, smiling tears,
Distilling sad, yet pleasant drops
From sweets of former years!"

It is that love slumbers on the thoughts of those who are gone; for such a flower perhaps in days of happy youth was the fond pledge given and received by one who sleeps beneath that green sod; and therefore now some deep loving, and in one sense happy, thoughts are blended with its pale beauty. He says to himself perhaps,

"New hopes, new thoughts, are in me stirred,
Old memories ne'er fade;
I have seen again my youth's fair flower,
I shall see again the maid!"

* Nat. Hist. xvi. 60.

"Yes, I shall see them all once more,
 Who now lie beneath the sod;
 They shall live and bloom eternally
 In the Paradise of God *."

The Duchesse de Richelieu, speaking of the grave of a certain Carmelite, says, "I have seen many of the persons who accompany the queen to visit it on the anniversary of her decease, gather some of the flowers near it, kiss them, and carry them away as a relic." There is a return to the thought which suggests all feelings and practices of this kind in the world around us. How many voices are heard now from persons separated by circumstances, that seem responding, like that of Madame de Staël, to the Catholic doctrine respecting the relation which the dead hold to the living! "A belief in the possibility of communion with the spirits of the departed, and that they watch over us, should," says Washington Irving, "be a new incentive to virtue, rendering us circumspect even in our most secret moments, from the idea that those we loved once and honoured are invisible witnesses of our actions. It would take away, too, from the loneliness and destitution which we are apt to feel more and more as we get on in our pilgrimage through the wilderness of this world, and find those who set forward with us lovingly and cheerily on the journey, have one by one dropped from our side."

We observed in the beginning that the road of the tombs is familiar to the young. At all seasons of the year they seem attracted to it; and when is a grave ever dug but you see some of tender age gathered round it, standing silent, and gazing, hand in hand, while bending low, their eager eyes explore its depth? But it is at the fall of the leaf, when the breath of winter comes from far and plays, as the poet says, "a roundelay of death among the bushes, to make all bare before he dares to stray from his northern cave," that the great anniversary of All Souls causes these holy colonnades to be thronged with visitants. Golden vesper's pageants are then the drifting yellow leavings of the first cold, for

"—— The charmed eddies of autumnal winds
 Build o'er these mouldering bones a pyramid
 Of red and gold leaves."

From the cemetery methinks one sees at such an hour a new tinge in the western skies—something beyond them.

"——— When sunbeams write
 With lengthening shadows on the graves reclined,
 Memorials of the perishable state
 Of all beneath the sun."

“ ——— The simple poor
 Still have a sacred prejudice which chimes
 Harmoniously with this! Nor can they brook
 That funeral mournfulness at still grave-side
 Should drop its tranquil, trembling, farewell tear
 Before those shadows warn of parting day.”

In Catholic countries and in religious communities, processions for the dead draw often crowds to visit, for a religious purpose, cemeteries, which themselves, when ancient by reason of their porticoes, arcades, and chapels, are visible witnesses of the universality and antiquity of prayer for the dead; since originally, as people met there to perform duties of religion, it was necessary to supply them with shelter from the weather, which was the reason why these oratories and piazzas were erected. At Grandmont supplications of this kind used to be made daily; the first after prime, the second after vespers, the third before comp-lin. To no strange brother arriving was any salutation given until he was led into the cemetery to pray for the dead. We see from the history of Madame de Longueville how the great ladies of France used to make a custom of visiting frequently the tombs of the Carmelite nuns whom they had known. The queen mother, Anne herself, says, “I often go to the tomb of Mother Magdalen, and I never fail to do so on the anniversary of her decease, whatever may be the number of affairs on that day; and I have often conducted to it the king, my son.” Wherever the ancient religion has votaries among the population, there are always some kind, constant friends visiting, as it were, the dead. Nature, indeed, herself will sometimes not be outdone in this affection. Where do you hasten, sorrowful sister? The answer may be,

“ ——— Thither where he lies buried!
 That single spot is the whole world to me.”

Then follow through the hallowed grove, and you will hear perhaps,

“ Now speak to me again! We loved so well—
 We loved! oh! still, I know that still we love!
 I have left all things with thy dust to dwell,
 Through these dim aisles in dreams of thee to rove.
 This is my home •!”

Perhaps we shall catch an echo of that older lamentation,

“ O! sygne, unto my roundelaie,
 O! drop the briny tear with me,
 My love is dedde,
 Gone to his death-bed
 All under the willowe tree.”

But it is at All Souls that the Catholic part of the inhabitants seem to desert the busy thoroughfares of the living for the calm, silent city of the dead. Then they are invited to do so, and take the funeral path that leads to household graves ; for on that day death would have us throng unto her palaces, and court her crowded sepulchres. The dew is still on the grass, the columns and images glitter in the golden light, and

“—— The merry lark has pour’d
His early song against yon breezy sky
That spreads so clear o’er our solemnity.”

Every variety of human class and age is met here—from the prince to the mendicant, from the aged mourning creature shuffling along with ivory-headed wand, to the poor girl who has just put on her stifling widow’s weed.

“Yet mournfully surviving all,
A flower upon a ruin’s wall,
A friendless thing whose lot is cast,
Of lonely ones to be the last ;
Sad but unchanged through good and ill,
Thine is her lone devotion still.

“And, oh ! not wholly lost the heart
Where that undying love hath part ;
Not worthless all, though far and long
From home estranged, and guided wrong ;
Yet may its depths by heaven be stirred,
Its prayer for thee be poured and heard*!”

The crowd that comes along the road, to use the words of a great author, forms a procession of nature, whose groups an artist may delight to study. The old man who loves the pilgrimage too much to avail himself of the privilege of a substitute accorded to his grey hairs, comes in person with his grandchild. There hasten also the young and the infantine ; some sorrowful faces, and some pale ; many a serious one, and now and then a frolic glance ; many a dame and many a maiden, curly-headed urchins with demure looks, and sometimes a stalwart form dispensed for the hour with his habitual labour. But not a heart there that does not bless and venerate the solemnity that calls them. Assuredly it is a good angel that guides to such a place our steps. We are all so much better for coming to it ! Our English cities seem beginning to desire a return to such devotions ; for they provide public cemeteries with attention to respect and even beauty. But, alas ! in spite of groves and pleasing walks, and pretty sculpture, and plenty of warm hearts among

the people, is it not to be feared that owing to instructions given by the interested in modern systems and manners rising out of them, Kensal-green and Norwood receive few special visitors who seek communion there with friends departed, each of whom with a double truth may say, in the words of the office, “*nee aspiciet me visus hominis?*” Many have adopted a new maxim, saying, in reference to them, “*De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.*”

“*Les morts durent bien peu : laissons-les sous la pierre !
Hélas ! dans le cercueil ils tombent en poussière
Moins vite qu'en nos cœurs !*”

Their only visitors now seem to be moving shadows on the grass and glossy bees at noon. Alas ! alas ! the beloved ones are alone, mouldering upon the skirts of human nature—far from the holy mass, far from all little sounds of life. The chapel bell is strange to them, and those whom they once so doated on are distant in a new humanity, which has removed itself from all communion with the dead. Their surviving friend is an honest gentleman, but he is never at leisure to be himself, he has such tides of business : or he is a foe to popery and enslaved by dogmatic formulas, and would deem it superstitious to visit through religion such a place. Though he may hear of well-attested, modern instances like that of Eisengrun, who said he was enjoined by an apparition to go to the Catholic cemetery of Neckarsteinach, and repeat certain words before a certain tomb there—the truth of whose statement was maintained before a judicial court, composed of shrewd, practical men, wholly uninterested, who decided in favour of an impression which seemed to justify what is produced with such effect in some of the most beautiful poems that our literature can boast of—he remains obdurate and unbelieving, while only the curious and impertinent now rudely press into the confines of forsaken graves. It would not be so, companion, if the tenderness of English hearts were given by Catholicism a direction, in regard to departed friends, beyond a mere sentimental indulgence, of which instinctively they feel the vanity. Let them only once know that their kindest office is to pray for them, and those who, living, were their garland's chiefest flower, and in their death hath buried their delights, would still be objects of an active as well as tender solicitude. We should then see the busiest men and youths stealing an hour from their drudgery to visit some companion's grave ; we should then see not alone some pretty, sad, talking boy, but fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and sweethearts, kneel and gaze upon these tombs, as if “each youth and tender maiden whom they once thought fair, with every friend and fellow-woodlander, passed like a dream before them.” Ποῦ δὲ οἱ καλοὶ εἰσιν, ἢ αἱ καλαί ; asks Menip-

pus in the Shades. He was shown Hyacinthus and Narcissus, and Helen and Leda. We, too, remembering those who once lived with us may be moved here to ask the same question, and when shown the spot not to answer cynically, like him, *ὅσῃ μόνον ὁρῶ, καὶ κρανία, τῶν σαρκῶν γυνῖά, ὅμοια τὰ πολλά*, but to believe that their beauty is now glorified and eternal. It is related of Luca Signorelli, that he had a son killed in Cortona, a youth of singular comeliness in face and person, whom he tenderly loved. In his deep grief, the father caused his child to be stript naked, and with extraordinary constancy of soul, uttering no complaint and shedding no tear, painted his portrait, to the end that he might still have the power of contemplating, by means of the work of his own hands, that which nature had given him, but which an adverse fortune had taken away. Even so would those persons gaze here, painting in their imagination the fair blue eyes, the dark or flaxen curls, the graceful form of those whom they loved dearer than all things else in life. Ah, how many poor lovers would they trace lying side by side perhaps!

“ Such thousands of shut eyes in order placed;
Such ranges of white feet, and patient lips
All pale—for here death each blossom nips.
They’d mark their brows and foreheads; see their hair
Put sleekly on one side with nicest care;
And each one’s gentle wrists with reverence
Put crosswise to its heart.”

This visiting of places where some of the departed may be even hovering near, has a natural attraction, and seems justified by the sense of the people still acquiescing in the ancient opinion that the souls of men, on being disengaged from the bodies, passing into a middle state, which implies, perhaps, not a place, but a condition of desiring, longing, asking, and praying, may not be far removed from the earth, which they can revisit, drawn by affection and the memory of the past. Popular and philosophic views seem to agree in favouring the opinion that as even here our spirits are where our thoughts and affections are, so may be our souls after leaving the body, as the old Greek says, though without meriting his ridicule, *ἐκείνων μεμνημένοι τῶν ἄνω*, since, as he represents them saying of themselves, *καὶ ἀποθανόντες ἔτι μέμνηνται καὶ περιέχονται τῶν ἄνω*. Who can disprove that the dead may sometimes also break through the boundaries that hem in the ethereal crowds; and, as if by trespass, in single instances infringe upon the ground of common corporeal life? In all ages of the world it has been thought that they retain their personality, their human form, and their interest in those who had been dear to them on earth, that they mourn over duties neglected and errors committed; and that they some-

times seek through the instrumentality of the living to repair injuries. But, as a modern author says, "What is in some countries generally called the religious world, is so engrossed by its struggles for power and money, or by its sectarian disputes and enmities, and so narrowed and circumscribed by what it deems dogmatic orthodoxies, that it has neither inclination nor liberty to turn back or look around, and endeavour to gather up from past records and present observation, such hints as are now and again dropt in our path to give us an intimation of what the truth may be." Central principles, then, have this immense attraction, that they sanction what mankind has always believed, and is still inclined to believe, on this head, and that they keep alive, at least by a yearly commemoration, the recollection of our deceased friends. Catholics have the day of All Souls—to the dead they believe devoutly, and to the living they visibly perceive, affording an immense consolation. Then upon

"A dreary morning they take this way
Into the breezy clouds, to weep and pray."

The path is still as the grave; men can recollect themselves, recollect the dead, and feel that eternity is not a dream. Then they go about the cemeteries, where lamps lend light to grubs and eyeless skulls, like that torch which burned in the Capels' monument. Then are some seen to open these dead men's tombs—these houses that last till doomsday; to enter past the iron door, and to kneel down in prayer. Thus they are familiarized with death; the place no longer yielding terror, though full of vaults and ancient receptacles, where, for these many hundred years perhaps, the bones of all their buried ancestors are packed. There are flowers, and crosses, and holy pictures, amidst forefathers' joints and by the side of some great kinsman's bone, perhaps laid bare by dirty shovels; and though the memory of some be green, yet so far doth discretion fight with nature, that we with wisest sorrow think on him, together with ourselves; and thus with their veiled lids sons seek for noble fathers, friends for companions, the betrothed for lovers, in the dust, having that within which passeth show—an understanding schooled—no peevish opposition; but a heart loving heaven, loving the dead, loving nature, loving all, and therefore unconsciously forethoughtful of itself.

But let us walk on—

"The dead are in their silent graves,
And the dew is cold above,
And the living weep and sigh,
Over dust that once was love *."

Mark that youth of fair but melancholy countenance, courteous in manners, yet proud and solitary. He seems lost in thought. If you would speak, he soon turns away and disappears among the tombs. It is some poet, some other Guido Cavalcanti, the bosom friend of Dante, who used to be so much alone among the marble sepulchres about the Church of St. John. Look again at that pale mourner with clasped hands standing by a fresh grave. She seems to be saying,

“ I weep—my tears revive him not !
 I sigh—he breathes no more on me ;
 His mute and uncomplaining lot
 Is such as mine should be *.”

Caligula's saying, implying a disregard for all memorial of the dead—

ἐμοῦ θανάτος γαῖα μυχθήτω πυρί,

argues an unnatural as well as selfish disposition of mind. As we observed already, the desire of a tomb, whatever Diogenes might say, forms even a distinctive attribute of our nature. Catholicism, however, once escaped from the catacombs, taught men to prefer the green earth to any vaulted solitude of Egyptian art ; and in fact, to nature's eye also, as Cyrus said, the ground which produces flowers and fruits constitutes the most magnificent of all sepulchres. Neither Cyrus, nor Alexander, nor Cæsar had a tomb—in the sense of heathen or of Jewish antiquity. During the middle ages, it is true, men were frequently entombed in vaults beneath the sacred edifices ; Constantine the Great chose to be buried thus in the church of the Twelve Apostles, in order as he said to have part after his death in the prayers of the faithful offered there † ; which however he might have had without taking such steps to secure them ; but the general practice of the early Church was different. The Jews always buried their dead without the city, except those of the family of David. The Romans placed the sepulchres of the most illustrious houses, as those of the Metelli, Claudii, Scipios, Servilii, and Valerii along the highways, which thence derived their names of the Via Aurelia, Flaminia, Lucilia, Appia, Laviniana, and Julia. In the environs of ancient Rome there were more than forty cemeteries, the names of which ecclesiastical history has preserved. Burial out of cities was an obligation upon the three nations who composed the primitive church, and the early Christians followed that wise practice. It was deemed criminal to allow the dead to be buried under churches ‡ ; and

* Shelley.

† De Vit. Constant. iv. 60.

‡ Marten, de Antiq. Monac. Rit. v. c. 10.

St. Chrysostom says cemeteries should be always placed beyond the gates of cities. The Christian emperors censured and prohibited burial within cities*. Theodosius the Great, in his celebrated constitution called the Theodosian Code, renewed preceding edicts, and on sanitary grounds forbade the interment of the dead in the interior of cities. The ancient ecclesiastical constitution and the bulls of the popes all concurred to preserve towns and churches from being invaded by the dead ; but in the sixth century, abuses relative to sepulchres being very prevalent, not only synods but even councils endeavoured to abolish them, and to restore the ancient discipline of the Church. The council of Bracar and that of Auxerre published celebrated canons on this head. Charlemagne lent all the force of his influence and of his laws to promote the same end ; Theodolphus at that time having complained that the churches of France had almost become cemeteries. Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, followed in endeavouring wholly to eradicate the abuse by cutting off all possibility of its being favourable to the material interest of the clergy. The councils of Meaux, of Nantes, and of Tribur, and Erasmus, archbishop of Tours, required the adoption of the same measures. Interment in churches was in fact prohibited by almost every council held in France, and in accordance with the capitularies which declare " Nullus in ecclesia mortuus sepeliatur." The Bishop of Avranches in 1600, of St. Malo in 1620, of Lizieux in 1630, of La Rochelle in 1655, of Chalons in 1661, of Amiens in 1662, of Orleans in 1664, of Aleth in 1670, of Cahors in 1673, of Senec in 1673, of Grenoble in 1690, of Noyon in 1691, of Soissons in 1700, and of Rouen in 1721, promulgated ordinances against burial in churches or towns. The most remarkable, perhaps, of all these statutes was that of De Lomenie de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, created a cardinal by Pope Pius VI., in which the learned and eloquent prelate, after speaking of the duty of attending to the public health, makes the remark that " such is the harmony always existing between religion and sound policy, that what is acknowledged as decorous and useful by the one, is also commanded and prescribed by the other." In fine, the royal decrees of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. concurring with these ecclesiastical enactments, a total end was put to burials within churches and cities in France ; and cemeteries were established beyond the gates of cities, as in primitive times. Catholicism thus evinces its affinity with what social legislation now endeavours to enforce, providing for all cities those public cemeteries which are recommended by the Church, both on grounds of respect for ancient discipline, and of regard for the health of the living, which

* Van Epsen, T. N. sect. 4, tit. 7, c. 2.

latter motive alone had induced the two celebrated physicians, Simon Pierre, of Paris, and Verbeyen, of Louvain, to order themselves to be interred under the open sky, as was attested on their epitaphs. This custom, too, seems to form an attraction in regard to the natural sentiment of men, which, as we observed above, if left to itself, would recoil from those mediæval crypts, those dreary caverns in which so many of noble races were inurned. That custom, as we have seen, originating, it is true, in a pious though not well-directed mind, was merely an abuse which frequently was maintained in consequence of interests that are entitled to no respect; and Catholicism, in reprobating and abrogating it, presents itself again favourably to the notice of all observers whose attention is called to this point of view. In fact, besides that the plan of a public cemetery is essentially Christian, which it undoubtedly is, since at no Pagan time were there universal burial places for all classes, but each rich family had its own spot, while only the slaves and the poor had their burial ground in common, there is something agreeable to the heart and soothing to the imagination in the thought of being inhumed under the canopy of heaven with the common people, so that those persons whom perhaps in life we could only be friends with secretly, though most entitled to affection as being unlike even in social position, the vain, affected, supercilious rich, who cannot even attain to the native grace and propriety of mien which so often distinguish the lowly, may find our grave, when visiting the resting-place of their own humble relatives. Perhaps, too, even on religious grounds, it is well to be buried near the penitents of the world, as Lacordaire calls them, near the common people, near those who knew what was hardship, and what was practical, cheerful humility; what it was to work for their daily bread, and to take the last place in public, and who were familiar with all the devices to which the lower classes are obliged to have recourse for their recreation, for their decent appearance abroad, and even for their subsistence. But, independent of all such considerations, one may repeat it, rather than choose the grim solitude of those dismal vaults, repulsive, in spite of philosophy and ancestral pride, to every beholder, every poet, at least, we may believe would prefer being buried in a garden like a public cemetery, with

“Two grey stones at the head and feet,
And the daisied turf between.”

Lucian represents some one in the shades laughing at Mausolus for boasting of his own great monument, which, however the Halicarnassians might like as a magnificent object to show to strangers, could only affect him as so much dead weight placed over his remains. “I cannot see,” he says, “what advantage

you derive from such an edifice, unless that you sustain a greater weight of stones over you than any other dead person." Though one may not, like the cynic, be wholly indifferent as to having a grave or not, one cannot I think but feel that it is desirable to strip the thought of death of all needless associations with the idea of confinement. "I have never seen death but once," says Hazlitt, recognizing this sentiment, "and that was in an infant. The look was calm and placid, and the face was fair and firm. It was as if a waxen image had been laid out, and strewed with innocent flowers. It was not like death, but more like an image of life! While I looked at it I saw no pain was there; it seemed to smile at the short pang which was over; but I could not bear the closing down—it seemed to stifle me; but as the flowers wave over his little grave, the welcome breeze helps to refresh me, and ease the tightness at my breast!" So every one finds it here; and though in this we think how we should feel, not how the dead perhaps feel, it is something to have even the illusion gratified.

This return, at all events, to the ancient Christian custom of having open cemeteries brings with it associations of basilicas and Catholic processions rather than those of modern sextons, parish beadles, and ministers, fattening their sheep. By means of its central attractions also evidently revive for some of all classes. We have already noticed some of the characters that can be met wandering here. See again that young maid who walks with eyes attentive to each name inscribed upon the tombs. She too represents an ancient class.

"——— The unfrequented woods
Are her delight; and when she sees a bank
Stuck full of flowers; she with a sigh will tell
Her comrades what a pretty place it were
To bury lovers in; and make the maids
Pluck 'em, and strew her over like a corse.
She carries with her an infectious grief
That strikes all her beholders; she will sing
The mournful'st things that ever ear hath heard,
And sigh and sing again; and when the rest
Of our young ladies, in their wanton blood
Tell mirthful tales in course, that fill the room
With laughter, she will, with so sad a look
Bring forth a story of the silent death
Of some forsaken virgin, which her grief
Will put in such a phrase, that, 'ere she end,
She'll send them weeping, one by one, away!"

A recent writer speaks of the harmony of beautiful places with our feelings for the beloved dead; the flowers planted by the hand of affection upon the graves, with the sun shining, the trees

waving, the song of the bird, the murmur of the bee, and the sky overspanning all, like the great blue eye of heaven ever over them, keeping silent watch. Turn from this picture to a vault or intermural yard, to the black mould, the coarse, rank, poisonous grass and nettles, the decayed monuments, and the dark shadows of the dismal walls, where the sunshine never sleeps, but where death and gloom ever dwell together. To the cemetery without the town the living can be easily induced to repair without reluctance, and there each one may gaze for a moment upon the grave of some dear friend,—

“ While lost to sight, th’ ecstatic lark above
Sings like a soul beatified of love.”

This place of rest in cowslipped lawns resembles, too, those happy fields where lovers first twined their youthful hearts together, and may serve, therefore, as the dying Zelia says, to enhance the earnestness of prayer :

“ ————— every wind
That meets thee here, fresh from the well-known flowers
Will bring the sweetness of those innocent hours
Back to thy soul, and thou may’st feel again
For thy poor lover as thou didst then ;
So shall thy orisons, like dew that flies
To heav’n upon the morning’s sunshine, rise
With all love’s earliest ardour to the skies !”

It is natural to wish that one may be buried in such a place, and be visited thus from time to time by those who come to sigh and to admire ; for who knows after all but that, as the poet says, deprecating any scorn of a tomb,

“ Nonnihil ad verum conscia terra sapit.”

It is natural to say in the words of our old dramatist : “ Raise no oppressing pile to load my ashes, but let from my flesh the violets spring, and let my dust moulder where those who knew me once can breathe a prayer full in the smile of the blue firmament.”

Socrates, alluding to the question of Crito, who had asked how he should be buried, said, “ Let him not talk of burying Socrates : for you should know, my dear Crito, that to express one’s self improperly is not only wrong in itself, but is besides a kind of injury inflicted upon souls. You must have more courage then, and say, that you bury my body ; and as for that, I answer that you may do as you like *.” In conformity with

this reply, sublime as he wished it to be understood, Plato expresses the folly of erecting an over-costly and pompous monument; for he says, "we must credit the legislator above all when he affirms that the soul is wholly distinct from the body, that in this life even it alone makes us what we are; that after death this soul departs to give an account of its actions as the law declares, to the good consoling, to the bad terrible—*τῷ μὲν ἀγαθῷ θάρραλόν, τῷ δὲ κακῷ μάλα φοβερόν*. That it is while alive, not after death, friends should have assisted the latter by endeavouring to make him lead a holy life—*ὅπως ὅτι δικαίωτατος ὦν καὶ δσιώτατος ἔζη τε ζῶν*. This being so, one ought not to impoverish one's house, supposing that this mass of flesh brought to the tomb is the person that was dear to us once; but a moderate expense in regard to this object of a tomb is better *." The voice of Catholicism, while it concedes more to the popular idea, is no doubt in accordance with these sentences. "Why seek so pompous a sepulchre," says Antonio de Guevara, addressing Princes. "It is a great shame for men noble and of high heart to see the end of your life, and never to see the end of your folly †." He returns to the subject, showing that state is not meet for those who dwell in dust. "I speak to the living," he says, "and I affirm that if those who are dead had leave to return to the world, they would occupy themselves more in correcting their sins and excesses than in adorning or rebuilding their sepulchres ‡;" and he reminds the great elsewhere that our Lord Himself had no tomb, and that therefore He was buried in a sepulchre which belonged to another. After all, do what you will to show respect and affection to the body, it will proclaim when left to itself its own nothingness. It is buried with the face upwards, as if it could hope or desire aught, but grave-diggers declare that in the course of decomposition the face of every individual turns to the earth, and that after long experience they have known of but few instances to the contrary. The soul—the soul, with all the emotions of love which it diffuses, that is what needs solicitude.

Nevertheless, Catholicism comprises that religion of the tombs to which the ancient races have been ever faithful, and to which the austere religious orders, including that to which Guevara himself belonged, seem not insensible; as when Buccius, mentioning the different disciples of St. Francis, begins by relating where each is buried. Thus, at Assissi, he says, lies such a brother, at Rome in the Ara Cœli such another, and so on. In general, Catholicism, nourishing all kind memories, tends to

* De Legibus, xii.

† L'Horloge des Princes.

‡ Liv. iii. 1252.

-§ Lib. Aureus Conform. Vit. P. F. ad Vitam J. C.

preserve an out-of-the-way knowledge of this kind in society. Vasari is careful to specify where every artist of whom he makes mention is interred, and it seems quite to distress him when he is unable to ascertain the place where the body of Fra Giocondo lies. Information like this would not have seemed frivolous to the ancients, for Strabo leads us to conclude that the knowledge essential to a geographer extends even to an acquaintance with the sites of the sepulchres of illustrious men *; and in effect, in his succinct description of all the regions of the earth, he finds place for specifying the spots where many tombs are situated, and sometimes he only distinguishes a city as being the place where some eminent man is buried †. But in modern times, if a nation be wholly uninfluenced by Catholicism, or the feelings emanating from it, few persons ever think of asking, unless in the case of some most eminent public man, where any one is buried; though, as if to shame this new form of humanity, there are instances of dogs, and even of tame ravens, evincing a knowledge of the spot where their benefactors have been interred, and repeatedly visiting it. The Benedictins of the congregation of St. Maur, it is true, had certain usages opposed to any distinction of monument for members of their own order; but when Mabillon died, it was no less solemn a voice than that of the sovereign pontiff which remonstrated against leaving his grave without a special tomb. Cardinal Colloredo, writing to Ruinart, describes the grief of Clement XI. on this occasion, and says, that the pope expressed his wish that so great a man might be buried in a distinct place, adding, "since all learned men who came to Paris would ask you—*ubi posuistis eum?* They would querulously lament," he said, "if they were told that his ashes were confused with others, and that no stone marked the precise spot where they lay."

Catholicism, if we may judge from its action in the primitive and middle ages, would cause the erection of tombs to be an ordinary work of friendship. Bartolommeo Barbazzi, a gentleman of Bologna, having lost some friends during the pestilence of 1525, erected, we are told without any expression of surprise by his contemporary, at great expense, a sepulchral monument for them, employing the first artists to execute it. Vasari relates another instance, which draws from him an interesting observation. "Daniello Ricciarelli, the painter and sculptor of Volterra, coming to Florence, had brought with him from Rome," he says, "a young pupil called Orazio Pianeti, an amiable and very clever youth; but this Orazio, whatever may have been the reason, no sooner arrived in Florence than he died, which circumstance caused his master, who loved him greatly, very heavy

* Lib. ii.

† Lib. viii.

sorrow. Being able, therefore, to do nothing more for this poor boy, he executed a beautiful bust of him in marble from a cast formed after death, and placed it with an epitaph on his grave; in this action proving himself to be a man of great goodness, and much more the friend of his friend than it is usual to find people now-a-days, seeing that there are but few who value any thing in friendship beyond their own convenience and profit." Such is the reflection of this amiable writer, who lived, we should take notice, at an epoch of transition in manners; but his remark continued long applicable, as subsequently such works were seldom thought to belong to common friendship. Pietro Perugino used to say that when it is fair weather a man must build his house that he may be under shelter when he needs it. So in their lives men were recommended, at a late period of our history, to provide a sepulchre; as in truth, to cite the words of our Elizabethan play, "If a man did not erect in that age his own tomb ere he died, he would live no longer in monument than the bell rang and the widow weeped. There would be no trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones." Chateaubriand, in the island of St. Christopher at Venice, seeing some mean little tombs, with crosses only of wood, exclaims, "Lo! how the Venetians, whose ancestors repose in the mausoleums of Frari, and of Saints John and Paul, bury now their children. Society in widening has sunk; and democracy has invaded death." But such remarks are not to be too far extended or generalized; for the ancient sentiment respecting the duty of erecting tombs, and the Catholic practise, have so far revived throughout Europe. Every where are now raised sepulchral monuments, which argue that wise moderation and that religious respect which it is an object of Catholicism to inspire. We have, in fact, only to look on any side where we stand to witness proof:

"Around me, marble tombs and columns riven
Look vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale
Wakes in these alleys grey its everlasting wail."

So let us wander on, reading the names of those whom the sun by day will no longer burn, neither the moon by night; for here, my poor departed one, thou verifiest what would have been sung at the vespers of thy office, if thou hadst been so commemorated—"Per diem sol non uret te, neque luna per noctem."

How wonderful is death! how eloquent the grave! Mabillon, in his *Iter Italicum*, relates that a certain Dutch missionary, named Albertus, from visiting the catacombs of Rome, was so moved that he renounced his errors, and flew to the Franciscans of strict observance, with whom he was then living as Brother Francis of Holland.

"Quis docet hic mundi fastus calcare superbos ?

Putria humatorum graveolentibus ossa sepulchris."

True, in the catacombs are higher inspirations than can be derived elsewhere. Who is unmoved on reading such an inscription as that which Mabillon found there ?

"Tempore Adriani imperatoris,
Marius adolescens dux militum, qui
Satis vixit, dum vitam pro Christo
Cum sanguine consumsit, in pace tandem
Quievit. Bene moerentes cum lacrymis
Et metu posuerunt *."

But without beholding the bones of the martyrs, there is still much Catholic instruction yielded by our common tombs ! For, in the first place, they teach humility and acquiescence in the only equality which is attainable on earth.

"The monuments of kings may show for them
What they have been, but look upon their dust,
The colour, and the weight of theirs, and beggars,
You'll find the same ; even 'mongst living men,
Nature has printed in the face of many
The character of nobleness and worth,
Whose fortune envies them a worthy place,
In birth or honour ; when the greatest men
Whom she has courted, bear the marks of slaves,
So here we'll look on those, and lay aside
The accidents of wealth and noble blood,
And in our thoughts will equal them with kings."

Again, they teach us to look upwards, and to have our ultimate hope elsewhere,—cæmeterii lectio mundi despectio ; and so in ancient pictures, a man is shown contemplating a cemetery, and these lines are added,

"Eia, sepulchreti ferales adspice campos !"

"O life ! how soon of ev'ry bliss forlorn !
We start false joys, and urge the devious race ;
A tender prey ; that cheers our youthful morn,
Then sinks untimely, and defrauds the chace."

The tombs teach us that before we can reach the true happiness we must take the road which leads to them. We have sought joy through every avenue. We feel that we are created for it.

'Αλλ' ἄλλην χρὴ πρῶτον ὁδὸν τελεῖσαι, καὶ ἰκίσθαι
Εἰς 'Αἶδαο δόμους καὶ ἐπαινῆς Περσεφονείης †.

* Iter Italic. vi. 136.

† x. 491.

Or, as another poet says, we must all wander far

“In other regions, past the scanty bar
To mortal steps, before we can be ta'en
From every wasting sigh, from every pain,
Into the gentle bosom of our love.
Why it is thus, One knows in heav'n above.”

The insatiate eyes accordingly to heaven are directed, even there where the central light, that drew to it so many upon earth, has its bright source for ever. But to gain this infinite eternal centre man must imitate those who have struggled, and with resolute will vanquished earth's pride and meanness, burst the chains—the icy chains of custom, and have shone. How audibly, then, are we taught many Catholic lessons for the conduct of life by looking down upon a grave thus! “The grave,” cries a London visitor, “buries every error—covers every defect—extinguishes every resentment. From its peaceful bosom spring none but fond regrets and tender recollections. Who can look down upon the grave of an enemy, and not feel a compunctious throb that he should have warred with the poor handful of dust that lies mouldering before him?” “Alas! no one need fear him now; for all his braves, his contumelious breath; his frowns, though dagger-pointed, his quarrels, and that common fence, his law; see! see! they are all eat out; here's not left one.”

As with private, so is it in this place with public or national differences. “We lie all alike under the common sod,” says Achilles, in the old dialogue of the dead, “and have no more animosities, so that neither do the Trojans fear me, nor the Greeks follow me as their leader.” And yet the ancients represented some men as carrying enmity beyond the grave, choosing to be separated from their former antagonists, even in death. Mopsus and Amphiloehus, coming from Troy, founded Mallus in Cilicia, and then the latter went to Argos, whence, not succeeding, he returned, and finding himself excluded, fought with Mopsus in a single combat, in which both were slain, and then they were so buried that from the tomb of the one that of the other could not be seen, and Strabo says that their sepulchres are still existing at Magarsa, near Pyramus*. What an ingenious device of hatred was this as expressed by the survivors! But let not the sweet tranquillity of this place be disturbed with such recollections:

“Who hath not loiter'd in the verdant yard,
And let his spirit, like a demon môle,

Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,
 To see skull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole ;
 Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr'd,
 And filling it once more with human soul* ?”

The tombs thus teach forgiveness, pity, charity, and that is again a long stage gained on the way to Catholicism. They teach the love of all our fellow-creatures, and indulgence for their faults ; they suggest that prayer which occurs in the anthem of vespers for the dead, and which one would wish to breathe here prostrate on the earth : “ Opera manuum tuarum, Domine, ne despicias.” God’s peace be with them ! “ No one comes to them now, to hold them by the hand, and with delicate fingers to smoothe their hair. They heed no more the blandishments of earthly friendship ;” and yet they desire some of its offices, and, for aught we know to the contrary, silently await our coming here to discharge them. Let us walk in soul once more, and prove ourselves in their regard loyal to the last.

But it is not alone for a friend, for an enemy, and for sinners, that the grave pleads. Its plaintive voice must also teach love and active solicitude for the poor :

“ For, oh ! those maidens young
 Who wrought in some dreary room,
 With figures drooping and spectres thin,
 And cheeks without a bloom—
 And the Voice that cried, ‘ For the pomp of pride
 We haste to an early tomb !’
 For the blind and the cripple are here,
 And the babe that pined for bread,
 And the houseless man, and the widow poor,
 Who begged to bury the dead ;
 The naked, alas ! that I might have clad,
 The famish’d I might have fed !
 The sorrow I might have soothed,
 And the unregarded tears ;
 And many a thronging shape is here,
 From long forgotten years.

* * * * *
 Each pleading look, that long ago
 I scann’d with a heedless eye,
 Each face seems gazing as plainly here,
 As when I pass’d it by ;
 Woe, woe for me if the past should be
 Thus present when I die !
 Alas ! I have walk’d through life
 Too heedless where I trod ;

Nay, helping to trample my fellow worm,
 And fill the burial sod—
 Forgetting that even the sparrow falls
 Not unmark'd of God *!"

Thus does a visit to the tombs conduce to the great object which Catholicism has most at heart, namely, imitation of the goodness of God in works of charity, for the sake of the common industrious classes of our fellow-creatures, causing us to remember henceforth the real sorrows and wants which, if we have any spark of generosity in us, we should search out, and share, and strive with all our strength to alleviate. The houses of the dead shall make you haunt those of the living poor, "where all that's wretched paves the way for death." Observing how neglect follows them even to the grave, you will resolve henceforth to be singular in their regard, and study service. I have been too indifferent, you will say, too full of pride and selfishness, inexorable, perhaps taking pride in believing that I belonged to a class of which the interests differed from those of the people: perhaps as insane secretly in respect to pride as those members of the revolutionary parliament of France, who when M. de Narbonne, in a speech as minister, said he appealed to the most distinguished minds of the assembly, felt indignation at the idea of even any intellectual superiority, and shouted out "No more of such expressions—*nous sommes tous distingués* †." Well this visit to the tombs has taught the good of being not distinguished, and so, you will continue, my whole nature is corrected. From this hour I am one of the people, a brother to the commonest, a friend, a lover of the lowly, one, in short, who henceforth abjures what we elsewhere saw designated as a vice that God detests, namely, "*verecundia de pauperibus amicis*." Such shame dwells not with good spirits in any sense of the term. But what a light heart must he possess through whom can be realized for some one every spring that wish so affectingly expressed by the poet of the poor sempstress,

"Oh! but to breathe the breath
 Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
 With the sky above my head,
 And the grass beneath my feet,
 For only one short hour,
 To feel as I used to feel,
 Before I knew the woes of want,
 And the walk that costs a meal!"

Henceforth, you will add, I wish to occupy myself with what concerns the common people, with their wants and interests,

* Hood.

† Villemain, *Souvenirs contemp.*

with their sorrows and their pleasures. I wish to labour with them, to take recreation with them, to live as much as I can with them, to pray with them, and to be buried with them, and that too from a hope that I may rise again with them, having them for company who will assuredly have least reason to tremble at the coming of the Judge. This practical love for the lowly, and identification of yourself with the people, which cause you to approach so near to Catholicity, can thus be the consequence of visiting the cemetery, where no one need blush to express such sentiments, confronted as he is there with the true popular state, that *ισοτιμία πάντων ἐνηγοριζόν*, which must delight the man who loves equality, as the old Greek says, alluding to the place of the dead. Yes,

“ One place there is,—beneath the burial sod,
Where all mankind are equalized by death ;
Juggle who will elsewhere with his own soul,
Playing the Judas with a temporal dole—
• He who can come beneath this awful cope,
In the dread presence of a Maker just,
Who metes to ev’ry pinch of human dust
One even measure of immortal hope—
He who can stand within that holy door,
With soul unbow’d by that pure spirit-level,
And frame unequal laws for rich and poor—
Might sit for Hell, and represent the Devil *.”

Elsewhere, too, you may think the humbler classes, sprung from lowly parentage, have had a sorry bargain for their life, but here you can feel that, in aiming by honest industry at heaven, their memory after death receives more honour from those who knew them than all yon marble pinnacles can raise the obdurate, or alabaster figures whiter far than e’er their souls were. You are advised, therefore, on occasion of such a visit, before it is too late, to unite yourself in mind and affections with those who are declared to have the best title to divine favour. You

“ Kneel down remote upon the simple sod,
And sue in formâ pauperis to God.”

We may add that the mere spectacle around us in such a place teaches us to pray for the dead. For it is hardly possible to enter a cemetery and not feel moved, secretly at least, in the deep temple of our heart, to address some prayer to the author of life, “ cui omnis caro veniet ;” and what can a generous mind here think of but the dead, who lie as it were under our feet, unable to help themselves ? These it feels instinctively are the most fitting objects for which prayers in such presence can be

offered up. Nothing can be more natural there than to breathe a supplication like that of the office, "Tu eis, Domine, dona requiem et locum indulgentiæ." In fact, both for the heart and the understanding, it is even an immense relief to say over each grave as we pass, "Huic ergo parce, Deus. Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis requiem."

Thus we can observe that there are issues through which some may be led by visiting the tombs to grow into a new belief, which perhaps without their impressive eloquence neither saints nor angels could have won them to have faith in. But let us consider them on another side. It is a natural wish of men that some name, some belief, some thought of their heart should live registered upon their brazen tombs; and Catholicism, in regard to this desire, is again found to be attractive, for what can compete with it in the art of tumular inscriptions? No one with a human heart will have courage to breathe a criticism standing by the tombs,

"Motto'd with stern and melancholy rhyme."

No one will propose even contrasts, though a sense of them may silently impress him. The maxims of a dangerous philosophy cannot probably be traced here as at Anchiale in Cilicia, where on the tomb of Sardanapalus his stone image was placed, representing him in the act of snapping his fingers, which was explained by lines inscribed upon it in Assyrian letters, which said that he had built in one day Anchialus and Tarsus, concluding with

"Eat, drink, play,
The rest's not worth a fillip * ;"

lines, less shameful perhaps, after all, as some have lately argued, than the trophy which magnifies tyrants and conquerors who have sought to make men "feel the weight of human misery more, and pass groaning to the tomb." In general, it is merely truisms, stereotyped formulas, which none may question, that can be collected from the worst modern epitaphs, which proclaim, in grammatical English at least, the beauty of virtue and the vanity of human wishes; but still in cemeteries, where sleep only those dear companions who have left their epitaphs to be traced by persons separated from the old faith, there is a want of something more impressive than even that testimony to the value of our domestic affections, with which they generally begin and end. Whereas Catholicism, as every one will acknowledge who has studied the point, is divinely eloquent on sepulchres. Its symbol, its brevity, sometimes its avoidance of all words, is significative;

but it has deep lofty sentences for such as prefer them. "The epitaphs found in the catacombs refute," says Gerbet, "that rigorism of Jansenistic origin which would efface from tumular inscriptions the praise of the dead and the tenderness of the living*. Non nomen, non quo genitus, non unde, quid egi. Mutus in æternum sum cinis, ossa, nihil." The style of such Pagan epitaphs was renounced by the Christians as a calumny of death. They had read that Jacob placed an inscription on the tomb of Rachel, and the church did not desire a simplicity greater than patriarchal. Dom Calmet wrote his own epitaph, which could be read in his abbey of Senones in Lorraine. It is as follows,

"Hic jacet F. Augustinus Calmet,
Patria Lotharus, religione christianus,
Fide Catholico-Romanus, professione monachus,
Nomine abbas hujus monasterii.

Legi, scripsi, oravi, utinam bene !
Hic exspecto donec veniat immutatio mea.

Veni, Domine Jesu !"

"Only think," says Chateaubriand, writing from Rome during his embassy, "last Thursday, before he fell sick, they found this poor Pope Leo XII. writing his own epitaph. They tried to turn away his mind from these sad ideas. 'No, no,' said he; 'it will be finished in a few days.'" True, the style of these Catholic compositions is often sublime from its simplicity. It sometimes recalls the lines of Dante—"I once was Pia. Sienna gave me life; Maremma took it from me." In the beautiful cemetery of Bologna, we find this inscription:

"Lucrezia Picini
Implora eterna pace,"

and not a word added. Witness again what lies here beneath our feet:

"Ah, Maria,
Puellarum elegantissima,
Vale !

Heu quanto minus est
Cum reliquis versari,
Quam cum tui
Meminisse !"

Nature has not made our hearts capable of pity, if we forbear it here. But as often this style is diffuse, though without losing thereby pathos and sublimity, take, for example, the epitaph of Alcuin, composed by himself:

"Hic, rogo, pauxillum veniens subsiste, viator,
Et mea scrutare pectore dicta tuo :

Ut tua deque meis agnoscas fata figuris,
 Vertetur species, ut mea, sicque tua.
 Quod nunc es, fueram, famosus in orbe viator,
 Et quod nunc ego sum, tuque futurus eris.
 Delicias mundi casso sectabar amore :
 Nunc cinis et pulvis, vermibus atque cibis.
 Quapropter potius animam curare memento
 Quam carnem ; quoniam hæc manet, illa perit.
 Cur tibi rura parvas ? quam parvo cernis in antro
 Me tenet hic requies ; sic tua parva fiet :
 Cur Tyrio corpus inhiat vestiriæ ostro,
 Quod mox esuriens pulvere vermibus edet ?
 Ut flores pereunt vento veniente minaci,
 Sic tua namque caro, gloria tota perit.
 Tu mihi redde vicem, Lector, rogo, carminis hujus,
 Et dic : da veniam, Christe, tuo famulo.
 Obsecro nulla manus violet pia jura sepulcri,
 Personet angelica donec ab arce tuba :
 Qui jaces in tumulo terræ de pulvere surge,
 Magnus adest judex millibus innumeris.
 Alchuin nomen erat Sophiam semper amanti,
 Pro quo funde preces mente, legens titulum."

How solemn is it to find among these new monuments some vestiges of the past thus ! "sepulchred emblems of dead destruction, ruin within ruin."

"Miremur periisse homines ? Monumenta fatiscunt :
 Mors etiam saxis, nominibusque venit."

There is something impressive even in the barbarism of letters and spelling, when combined in these tumular inscriptions, with a keen and just appreciation of Christian virtues, as it proves how, in the rudest times, the same goodness and faith that we admire now were glorified. Take, for example, the following remarkable epitaph, of the sixth or seventh century, at Viviers, on the banks of the Rhone : "Conduntur hoc tumulo in scario præclari Patroni membra famoli. Fuit iste caretate primus humilitate alts humanetate largissimus, omnes piæ diligens odio habens nemenem, de profectu cunctorum indiscrete gaudens et proficere provocans—multus, Pascasius iste prb quem invida mors raptim tolit de mundo, ejus ultima die sænum—ac juvenum incipientumq : et pauperum lacrimas rigasse hunc locum fusæ probantur—priscam beati tenens patris Venanti doctrinam alere stoduit orfanus tegens nudus virtute—qua potuit, habuit talem cum omnebus vitam ut funeris sui exsequias præsentia pontificis ac sacerdotum clerique et plebis meruerit cum lamentatione et laudebus honorari sicq vitam ejus dum finitur in laude felix provavit exitus, feliciter peractis decim lustris—vitam duxit in pace." So, again, another of the ninth century is to this effect :

"In oc tumulto requiescit bone memorie Ingiranus fidelissimus laicus plenus fide et omī veritate*." The stress laid in those times upon "humanity," and the very usage of the word might be pointed out, perhaps, with advantage to some in this nineteenth century. Here are verses, again, that belong to a distant age. They form the epitaph on William, the third abbot of Bec:—

"Dura nimis jam tolle tibi tua jugera, munde,
 Heu mihi tam longa me tenere mora.
 Amodo jam non illa colam : patet exitus a te ;
 Et jam longinquo solvor ab exilio.
 Ad propriam redeo patriam, Dominus revocat me,
 Unde prius fueram, præcipit ut redeam,
 Novit cum lacrymis illum quem sæpe rogavi.
 Ut venia pravum diluat omne meum :
 Ærumnasque meas tandem miseratus amaras
 De convalle soli tollat ad alta poli.
 Hactenus hæc, eo, stare meum non amplius est hic :
 Ossa relinquo tibi, si placet hæc sepoli."

Another ancient tumular inscription is as follows:—

"Frumenti granum remanens in cespite saxum,
 Donec putruerit, crescere non poterit.
 Sic nisi nostra caro mortis tangatur amaro,
 Percurrens studium non recipit bravium.
 Ergo scire datur quod non deceat ut doleatur.
 Si patriam querat, qui peregrinus erat †."

But the genius of Catholicism in this respect seems not exhausted in any age, as many of the epitaphs that we read still in countries where it reigns can bear witness. Mark even the Catholic tombs in our common English cemeteries. How affecting is the imagery employed, as of old! How impressive the prayer! Truly, one may love to walk alone, or with some sweet companion, through the groves and tombs of Kensalgreen or Norwood, repeating to one's self, like Johnson, the line which here argues no ambition :

"Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscabitur istis."

It is a most sweet affliction. Some men could not meet a joy in the best shape with a better will. Although "their hairs may not, by the winter of old age, be the least hid in snow," yet if some few messengers of swiftly fleeting time should have taken up their lodging in them, they may think about preparing an epitaph for themselves ; and then it will be to the old source of inspiration for such inscriptions that they will apply, as even

* Bib. de l'Ecole des Chartes, iv. 597.

† Vita Abb. Beccensium.

Hood himself turned when desiring that his name, as that of him who sung 'The Song of the Shirt,' should be the sole inscription on his tomb, since the charity which inspired that thought centres there. They will, however, generally prefer even its formulas, and desire that some other wanderer along the green lanes and hedge-rows in the environs of London, who shall stray in here to visit tombs, may find under their own name inscribed upon a stone these words, taken from the very missal: "Heu mihi, Domine, quia peccavi nimis in vita mea! Ubi fugiam nisi ad te, Deus meus?" No one, in fact, however rude, can err in regard to the style or to the thought who applies to Catholicism for a tumular inscription; and remark here a very significant fact observed by Gerbet. "Take," he says, "one of the ancient Christian epitaphs like that on a sepulchral stone found in the catacombs of St. Saturnin with the words, 'Stratonice neophita exivit e sæculo: Et deposui eum in martyrio precatum cum pace,' or that from the catacombs of Saints Gordian and Epimachus:

'Sabbati dulcis
Anima pete et ro-
Ga pro fratres et
Sodales tuos,'

and place it in a modern Catholic cemetery, and it will present no contrast, but it will be in perfect harmony with the surrounding inscriptions. Remove it to a burial ground, belonging exclusively to those who have renounced all central principles, and however some local authority, wishing a return to them, may invent subtleties, to cause it to be tolerated, the general sentiment of the parish will cry out against Rome with indignation for an attempt to insinuate its faith*."

But, companion, methinks a new general impression has come over us while we walk thus between the tombs, as if there was something in the aspect of this whole place, and in the feeling which it awakens imperceptibly but surely, which causes not a brake here and a brake there, but such wide issues to be opened from it to the Catholic church, that there seems to be no more of the forest left to separate us from it. By the civil law, a place becomes "religiosum" by the mere fact of a dead body being buried there with the consent of the owner of the land. There seems to be proof in what we now experience that the prescription was most natural, and that in fact this place is religious as a holy temple. Coming into it unpremeditatedly, perhaps, and having at our side only some light-hearted companion, the mind feels itself notwithstanding of a sudden impressed with a sense of all that it knows Catholicism has ever taught. How

sure are we to be reminded of the person so holy in secret whom we have left at home, perhaps like the stranger, whose feelings, if transported to such a place as this, we seem instinctively to know would be something more tender, more spiritual, and divine, than we ourselves can even imagine ! How would those familiar eyes beam here with a woman's love and a saint's desires, giving one look to him she loves, and another to heaven,

"As if she would bear that love away
To a purer world and a brighter day !"

"O melancholy, linger here awhile !
O music, music, breathe despondingly !
O echo, echo, from some sombre isle,
Unknown, Lethæan, sigh to us—O sigh !
Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile !
Lift up your heads, sweet spirits, heavily,
And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,
Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs †."

We have already noticed many particular lessons taught by this religious place, which direct to Catholicism as to the centre. There is still this general impression left, which it would be well to analyze, observing its tendency in regard to the direction of our steps. Hope, then, and cheerful confidence, will be found to constitute the basis of this feeling. "I doubt," says Longfellow, on visiting one of these beautiful cemeteries, "whether any one can enter this enclosure without feeling the religion of the place steal over him, and seeing something of the dark and gloomy expression pass off from the stern countenance of death." The symbol of salvation and of life standing over so many graves, seems to utter audibly the response of the office of the dead, "Credo quod redemptor meus vivit : et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum. Et in carne mea videbo Deum salvatorem meum." However solemn and solidly constructed the tombs before us may appear, imagination never conjures up such a desolating perspective as the 'domus ultima' or the 'indomitæ morti' of the ancient poet. All that form of thought and expression is forgotten here ; and a new train of ideas succeeds in accordance with that rhythm composed by Peter the Venerable, which begins—

"Gaude mortalitas,
Redit æternitas
Qua reparaberis ;
Quidquid de funere
Soles metuere
Jam ne timueris ‡."

* Percival.

† Keats.

‡ Rythm. in Laud. Salvat. Bibl. Pat. xxii.

There is a picture of death by a German artist which represents it under the form of a young female face, deeply shadowed, looking at you. When viewed from a distance, it only expresses a soft melancholy, and a loveliness painfully sublime; but on approaching it, you perceive large and loving eyes smilingly fixed on you, and from the profound shadows that encompass them, inviting you towards itself with an invincible attraction. Something like this effect is produced by the near view of death which we are taking here.

In point of fact, we feel that there is something cheerful in the aspect of this place, which invests death with a different character from that in which it appears to the solitary imagination brooding in a chamber over dismal thoughts, and excluded from beholding trophies of its ruin. This place seems to proclaim not destruction, but deliverance, as in the words of the mass on Holy Innocents' Day, "*Anima nostra, sicut passer, erepta est de laqueo venantium: laqueus contritus est, et nos liberati sumus.*" Perhaps, says a sceptic, as if he was endeavouring to account for the fact of this impression arising from what is seen here, "religious considerations reconcile the mind to places of this kind sooner than any others, by representing the spirit as fled to another life, and leaving the body behind it, so that in viewing death we mix up the idea of life with it." The truth is, that we all do so. At the sight of this cross we seem to hear our Lord saying, as in the Gospel for the mass of burial, "*Resurget frater tuus!*" We shall meet again, every thing around us seems to cry; and somehow or other the little birds appear to whisper to us we shall yet be happy. We are cheerful here for the reason that the cemetery, after all, brings us more face to face with truth and mercy, with the Author of life, and not with men who speak for Him. The cemetery is the book for all persons of deep feelings, of fine souls, of exquisite sensibility. They grow weary at last of all others. It is the book of joy. These gleams of life, almost sure to be followed by shadows on the morrow, are too bright for our frailty to sustain and too fleeting to content us: it is better to close our eyes to them, and awake with renovated and immortal vision. It is the book of lovers—their hearts are vainly struggling; it is better to turn to their dust, and spring up with love glorified. It is the book of genius—these raptures surpassing thought, seek the sun, in which their rays are fixed and unchangeable. It is the book of hope—this world has only dreams to offer, and we look for what is real. It is the book of goodness—here we wish in vain to practise it. We weary, we disgust our friends; we wound, we lament ourselves. There above we can possess it, adore it without shame, smile and be smiled upon for ever! It is here,

then, that words like those of Maria, in one of our old plays, seem to flow spontaneously :

“ ——— Death is unwelcome never,
 Unless it be to tortured minds and sick souls,
 That make their own hells ; 'tis such a benefit
 When it comes crown'd with honour, shows so sweet too !
 Though they paint it ugly, that's but to restrain us,
 For every living thing would love it else,
 Fly boldly to their peace ere Nature call'd 'em ;
 The rest we have from labour and from trouble
 Is some incitement ; every thing alike.
 The poor slave that lies private has his liberty
 As amply as his master, in that tomb,
 The earth as light upon him, and the flowers
 That grow about him smell as sweet and flourish ;
 But when we love with honour to our ends,
 When memory and virtues are our mourners,
 What pleasures there ! they are infinite.”

Poujolat remarks, that “ in the East the cemeteries are smiling, delightful spots, and that the tombs are associated with the most beautiful and soothing images of life *.” The same observation may be made at Bologna, Ferrara, Lyons, Paris, and even at cemeteries near London, which have been recently provided in imitation of those which Catholicism introduced. Here, too, we seem to pass ‘ in regionem vivorum.’ For, after all, consciously or unconsciously, these all were children called under the same title to immortality, and if some of them, swayed by potent circumstances, erred through ignorance invincible, we are told that the Catholic Church forbids us not to entertain hopes of their condition. Past beyond the gates of eternity, and needing no more warnings from her, they are committed by her to infinite goodness, to infinite compassion. Hope, then, is the very atmosphere we breathe here ; all nature smiles around us. “ The flitting birds are throwing their soft shadows over the sunny lawns, and rustling amid the blossoms of the variegated groves ; the golden wreaths of the creeping plants and the bright berries of the mountain ash stream and glitter ; the bees are as busy as the birds, and the whole scene is suffused and penetrated with brilliancy and odour.” Catholicism, freed from the gloom of modern opinions, for it returns to us in these combinations, tends thus to associate tombs even with loveliness, and with the bright thoughts that spring from contemplating beauty. We read of the cardinals Cibo and Salviati, with Messer Baldassare de Pescia, being entertained at supper in the garden of Cardinal

Ridolfi, at Sant' Agata, they having all assembled there for the purpose of coming to a conclusion as respected the manner to be observed in certain sepulchral monuments which were in process of erection. Such was their theme during what might be called a party of pleasure. The Church, in her benediction of a cemetery, employs only smiling images. Addressing God, she styles it, "*Mausoleum peregrinorum tuorum cœlestis patriæ incolatum expectantium.*" She invokes the Almighty Father as "*locorum omnium sanctificator, et in melius reformator, a quo et per quem omnis benedictio de cœlis descendit in terris.*" In this benediction she seems especially to have regard to light, invoking Him "who is eternal day, unfailing light, everlasting brightness, who prescribes to his followers so to walk that they may be able to escape from the darkness of eternal night, and arrive happily at the country of light—'*ut noctis æternæ valeant caliginem evadere, et ad lucis patriam feliciter pervenire* *.'" As symbolical of this desire, it was the custom during the middle ages to have lights in cemeteries ever burning. Thus, in 1290, Henry Sack, a noble soldier, bequeathed by will to the monastery of Reinhardsborn half a mark, to be applied by the abbot to the expense of maintaining lights in the cemetery to burn all through the night for ever †. So also in the cemetery of Grandmont lamps perpetually burned ‡; and in Catholic countries at the present day lamps are suspended within sepulchres, and occasionally lighted. At All Souls many of these are seen burning in the cemeteries round Paris. "At Bonn, on the eve of All Souls, we remarked," says a traveller, "a beautiful practice in the cemetery which is outside the town towards the west, which we understood to have been lately introduced from Bavaria, of illuminating, with every variety of taste, the cherished spots which bring back, as in a pleasing, though melancholy dream, so many dear recollections of days for ever gone by. With the shades of evening the effect of this tribute of affection increases; and in this night of mixed emotions—kept as the festival of souls in the intermediate state—the cemetery is a field of light and beauty, emblematic of that world of unfading brightness, into which surviving friends hope and pray they soon may enter. In the midst of the religious devices which variegate the general illumination, the cross, as the sign of our redemption, or the cross, anchor, and heart, as emblematic together of faith, hope, and charity, are every where conspicuous. As night advances, the multitudes diminish; but numbers, unmindful of cold or damp, yield only to the feelings of pious affection; and it is late indeed before the hallowed enclosure is again left to the departed."

* De Coemeterii Benedictione.

† Thuringia Sacra, 126.

‡ Annales Grand. v.

True, there is always a grave, moral lesson uttered by tombs, which prompts the heart to cry, in the awfully-sounding words of the office, "*Domine, secundum actum meum noli me judicare: quia peccavi nimis in vita mea, commissa mea pavesco, et ante te erubescō: dum veneris judicare, noli me condemnare.*" And yet when we visit such places this terror, I know not how, seems but a transient and quite secondary impression, which it is difficult even to recall. Hope and confidence seem to reign with invincible power. In this open, smiling meadow, not without a secret and mysterious cause so beautiful, with emblems of light and life on all sides, it can hardly occur to the imagination to represent those who sleep here as having passed to the dark land, covered with the obscurity of death, to the land of misery and darkness, where is no order, but where perpetual horror dwells; one thinks rather of those who found themselves delivered when the Redeemer of the earth descended, to whom the Church cries in these words, graphic as the sublimest painting, "*Libera me qui portas æreas confregisti, et visitasti infernum, et dedisti eis lumen, ut viderent te—qui erant in pœnis tenebrarum—clamantes et dicentes: Advenisti, Redemptor noster.*" One thinks of those images saluted in the anthem of the Purification—"Germinavit radix Jesse, orta est stella ex Jacob: Virgo peperit Salvatorem; te laudamus, Deus noster." One thinks, therefore, on the whole, of Heaven, and of those who are already there enthroned in eternal love; and so the road of the tombs produces the effect of causing men to look up to that sovereign light,

"From whose pure beams all perfect beauty springs
That kindleth love in every godly sprite,
Even the love of God, which loathing brings
Of this vile world, and these gay-seeming things;
With whose sweet pleasures being so possessed,
Their straying thoughts henceforth for ever rest *."

But to contemplate the bliss of eternity, where at last we may all meet for pure, unclouded joy together, without any more distinctions to cause disunion between hearts that were made to love each other, is to have one's thoughts directed in accordance with Catholicism, and in opposition to all the influences of that mere earthly country, where

"Seldom desponding men look up to Heav'n,
Although it still speak to 'em in its glories;
For when sad thoughts perplex the mind of man,
There is a plummet in the heart that weighs,
And pulls us, living, to the dust we came from."

Therefore by means of the general impressions consequent on a visit to the tombs, there is effected a spacious opening, on the attractions of which no one can be required to dilate; for

“Heaven’s bright gleams need not the painted flourish of our praise!”

“Oh! not the visioned poet in his dreams,
When silvery clouds float through the wildered brain,
When every sight of lovely, wild, and grand
Astonishes, enraptures, elevates;
When fancy at a glance combines
The wondrous and the beautiful,
So bright, so fair—a scene
Hath ever eyes beheld.”

And yet there are thousands inspired by the central wisdom, who from these very graves standing thoughtful over them,

“On the everlasting light, wherein no eye
Of creature, as may well be thought, so far
Can travel inward—gaze fixedly.”

They pore upon the view that faith unfolds to them

“———— As one
Who, vers’d in geometric lore, would fain
Measure the circle *.”

“There,” cries St. Bonaventura, “the wisdom of Solomon is folly; the beauty of Absolon, deformity; the swiftness of Asaël, slowness; the strength of Samson, weakness; the years of Mathusale, mortality; the kingdom of Augustus, destitution.” There will be the plenitude of light to reason, the multitude of peace to the will, the continuation of eternity to memory; in a word, as Augustin says, “the necessary presence of all good, the necessary absence of all evil.”

“Pax securæ, decus, et gaudia sunt animabus
Gaudia, pax, requies, libera ac securæ juventus †.”

Such keenness from the living ray those who thus meditate on heaven meet, that if their eyes should turn away they think they would be lost, and though of course never can they conceive such absolute felicity, yet a flash will sometimes dart athwart their mind, and, in the spleen, unfold a reflection of what they seek. “O felix illa Alleluia!” exclaims St. Augustin in one of these moments; “o securæ! o sine adversario! ubi nemo erit inimicus, et nemo perit amicus. Ibi laudes Deo, et hic laudes Deo. Sed hic a sollicitis, ibi a securis; hic a morituris,

* Par. 33. † Bonaventura, *Compend. Theolog. Verit.* vii. c. 31.

ibi a semper victuris ; hic in spe, ibi in re ; hic in via, illic in patria *." Alanus de Insulis, similarly rapt in an ecstatic vision, attempts to describe it, saying,

" Illic risus sine tristitia, sine nube serenum,
 Deliciæ sine defectu, sine fine voluptas,
 Pax expers odii requies ignara laboris,
 Lux semper rutilans, sol veri luminis, ortus
 Nescius occasus, gratum sine vespere mane.
 Hic splendor noctem, saties fastidia nescit,
 Gaudia plena vigent, nullo respersa dolore.
 Non hic ambiguo graditur fortuna meatu,
 Non risum lacrymis, adversis prospera, leta
 Tristibus infirmat, non mel corrumpit aceto,
 Aspera commiscens blandis, tenebrosa serenis,
 Connectens luci tenebras, funesta jocosis :
 Sed requies tranquilla manet, quam fine carentem
 Fortunæ casus in nubila vertere nescit †."

There is, in fine, an observation suggested by what is seen in cemeteries that may be classed among the general impressions produced by them, partly accounting for the cheerfulness they inspire, which consists in remarking that it is a mistake to associate the idea of solitude, and even of leaving the society of men, with death.

Lady Capulet is struck with the multitude to whom in such a place she is introduced. "How oft," she exclaims, "to-night have my old feet stumbled at graves!" Here one beholds, as it were, a city thickly peopled, a nation, as Homer says. The sense of loneliness and desertion does not here belong to the thought of death. Through these lovely groves and sloping lawns one wanders, as it were, in company with those who only yesterday smiled on us in the streets. We see how numerous are the visitors ; for, after all, the dead are here but visitors like ourselves. The multitude of the former nation being thus presented to us, we feel as if we should be in as much society here, yes, and as much too with the young and beautiful, whose spirits may be looking down upon all, remembering them or compassionating them on reading some bitter fate recorded on their tomb, as if we remained in the capital. In the vision of Drythelm, recorded by Bede, the abode of the just after death was seen full of youth. His guardian angel explaining what he had witnessed, said to him, "That flowery place wherein thou didst see that most beautiful band of young folks so bright and gladsome, is the one wherein the souls abide that wait till the day of judgment for admission into heaven." A noble independence, an elevation of sentiment over every thing like human respect,

arises, therefore, from considering thus how greatly the dead outnumber the living! We are brought, then, to contemplate the mute and boundless fields of the invisible Church, in which men should wander more than they do; for in this consideration lies the Catholic's refuge from the world. In effect, we need not fear the want of human company on this road, though we may not see our associates and fellow-travellers; but for that matter neither in life do we see our best friends always living under the same roof with us. Seventy-five thousand persons are supposed to die daily throughout the world; and how many leave each city the same day and hour, each of whom might be consoled by the idea of human sympathy? Chateaubriand, on one occasion, seems suddenly struck with the numbers that he has personally known, and who were already gone. Towards the close of his memoirs he calls over the list of his former contemporaries, and demands of each, "Where art thou? Answer," he says. "Alexander, emperor of Russia? Dead. Francis II., emperor of Austria? Dead. Louis XVIII., king of France? Dead. Charles X., king of France? Dead. George IV., king of England? Dead. Ferdinand I., king of Naples? Dead. Charles Felix, king of Sardinia? Dead. The duke of Tuscany? Dead. The duc de Montmorency? Dead. Mr. Canning? Dead. Ministers of foreign affairs of France, England, Prussia? Dead." What young man or woman, even in the humble walks of common life, has not, however brief their experience, within the memory some catalogue of this kind as impressive to their poor hearts as the list of the renowned departed proved to the statesman? Where are the fair and comely ones each will ask at times—Anne and Harry, sweet Alice, and "all the friends who were schoolmates then?" Oh! don't you remember? and then, as the popular song of Ben Bolt recurs to them, the eyes will glisten with a tear that youthful bashfulness would hide. Nevertheless, in these cemeteries, consecrated by the holy cross which shines over the graves, Death, after all its trophies, seems visibly dethroned, and unable to nullify the worship of the heart which rises to Him, to whom all live,—"*Regem cui omnia vivunt.*" In being borne hither, the dead seem only to join the majority, and to be united to the whole. What can be better than by surmounting all causes of separation and of isolation, of partition and exclusion, to follow in a Christian sense the advice of Simplicius, "*conungere se cum universo,*" as Alfonso Antonio de Sarasa even expressly recommends us to do in his treatise on the art of rejoicing evermore*? In this world of ours, so beset with difficulties and dangers, real or imaginary, we live for the most part shut up and fenced in in particular houses,

and can only fancy on passing others at rare intervals how sweet it would be to live with them. There above, after taking this preliminary road of the tombs, we shall be all of us together, without confinement and without disunion, enjoying the same felicity, with the same assurance that it is to be for ever! Here, then, is a place where, without the risk of any dangerous theory, one may be absorbed in a contemplation of the universal frame of things. Here you feel, as you never before felt, that you cannot die, so as to be separated from those you love; that you and they must live for ever. Here you feel fulfilled in yourself the lines of Pope:

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be, blest.
The soul uneasy and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come."

In fact, even in these common cemeteries one verifies in part the observation of Gerbet on visiting the tombs of the first Christians; for he says, "In the catacombs, all graves that they are, the thought of death is only accessory. The predominant sentiment is that of immortality. If faith in the future life could be lost on earth, we should find it again in the cemeteries of the martyrs. The immense love of truth and justice which has consecrated these places must have another destination besides an eternal hole in a quarry of pouzzoli. The monument of this love cannot be the vestibule of annihilation. The most hardened materialist would, I am sure, be staggered after half an hour's meditation in the catacombs*." We are not here near the martyrs, perhaps any thing, alas! but that; still we are near those who suffered much, who loved and desired much: we do not trace the palm-branch or the phial, but without any stretch of imagination the tear can be made out, and the lowliness and the poverty. In this place, too, might have been commemorated brave and continued struggles, acts of self-sacrifice, goodness, love, in which perhaps it would not be false or overstrained to say that God did all, as the ancient chorus added,

κούδεν τούτων, ὃ τι μὴ Ζεὺς †.

At all events, every one here can see, as it were, that to Him "omnis caro veniet;" and so in the office after the words, "Putredini dixi: Pater meus es; Mater mea et soror mea, verminibus," the dead seem to strike their hands together, clasping them, and respond, "Ubi est ergo nunc prelatio mea? et patientiam meam quis considerat? Tu es, Domine, Deus meus."

But we must depart, since now our youthful wanderers, with whom we entered this enclosure, can see the sun kissing the

domes and spires of the distant city, warning them that it is time to bend thither their returning steps. We have observed then in general that the effect of visiting the tombs is often the exact contrary of what might be expected, being not only to strip death of its repulsive forms, and by the very spectacle of its power to cause a reaction of hope, as if one felt that He who is stronger than death, and who has already triumphed over it, will, from the very fact of its cruel ravages, be resolved to put a limit to its reign, and suffer it not to prevail for ever over His poor creatures; but that it has a most sensible power to catholicize the mind, to change the whole current of men's thoughts, and to prepare the way for a union of heart and understanding with the central wisdom. In the life of every man, to use the words of a remarkable writer, there are sudden transitions of feeling which seem almost miraculous. The causes which produce these changes may have been long at work within us, but the changes themselves are instantaneous, and apparently without sufficient cause. It is so often with the visitor who comes here, and begins to find "the solemn wand'rings of a wounded mind;" for of the tombs one may say,

"They gie the wit of age to youth,
They let us ken oursel;
They make us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill."

The old dialogue which represents the dead being required to lay aside the burden of all their evil dispositions before stepping into the ferry-boat, has here a sublime meaning, and often a most practical realization in regard to all the impediments which keep men from proceeding to the centre. They can hear themselves called here with a most audible voice to cast away their anxiety to make a fortune rapidly, reckless of the wants and hardships of their workmen; to give up their affection for riches, with all their pride and contempt of others; their wrath, and impatience, and disdain. The philosopher and self-called teacher of his own notions must recognize here the necessity of parting with his contentious spirit and vain glory, his high-sounding sentences, veiling ignorance, and his littleness of mind imposing upon others,—*καὶ τὸ οἶσθαι ἀμείνω εἶναι τῶν ἄλλων*. The rhetorician, so potent in certain halls and public meetings, must feel that he cannot retain his loquacity, his antitheses, his nice balancing of phrases, regardless of truth, his solemn periods, and all his weight of words with which he has so often opposed the central wisdom. The tombs also bring forcibly before us the unity of the human race in regard to its object and dangers on

the common journey of life, showing how we all have the same wants, how the same principles are necessary for us all, and how, while loving one another, we should all be armed with one and the same hope, as well as with the same or kindred virtues. As in the new mode of travelling with a multitude, the guard, when addressing all classes, young and old, at the moment of requiring some observance, uses the words "All of you," which seem so strange to the rich and privileged few that may chance to be seated with the commonalty, so on the road of the tombs there is a voice addressed without ceremony to all alike, familiar yet imperious, playful yet solemn, which when heard by all but the proud soothes, while it communicates some stern, necessary, and undeviating law. There is, in fact, on the whole nothing that naturally leads the mind so far or so promptly towards central thoughts, as a visit to the cemetery. While begetting in us, I know not how, a soft, religious tenderness, nothing moves it more to a sense of the mysterious, supernatural side of things; so that lovers' walks directed hither by chance, and commenced with only the wish to be, as we say, romantically amused, may prove by their results that pleasure, for even such votaries, is not always vain, and that its rambles may lead to the true and everlasting rest.

It is said with inimitable simplicity and beauty in the Gospel, remarks a great writer, that the disciples, having viewed the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection, "went away again to their own home." From the contemplation of the greatest prodigy, from almost immediate contact with it, they returned to their houses and to the ordinary affairs of common life, as if to show that great thoughts, underlying and animating small duties, is the true philosophy of existence. So unconsciously it is here with these young persons.

"Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
They mourn that day so soon has glided by:
E'en like the passage of an angel's tear,
That falls through the clear ether silently *."

And even still, while on the way home returning thus to the metropolis on a lovely evening, watching the setting sun as its dying glory illumines each object on the road, while perhaps a tear, mingling with a smile, is ready to steal down some fair,

pensive face, without our knowing why, how many thoughts, that seem "to lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds," silently direct to the centre, while the heart is thus open and insensible to all selfish, crabbed influences. Watching and doting upon the lakes "pictured in western cloudiness that takes the semblance of gold rocks and bright gold sands, islands and creeks, and amber-fretted strands, with palaces and towers of amethyst, beautiful thoughts, full of sweetness and tranquillity, and consolation come clustering round the heart like seraphs!" It is a propitious moment; for each of these poor excursionists, under the lingering impressions of the late scene which has acted secretly as a very powerful revelation of the mysteries of existence, will reflect and say,

"Why, all men's actions have some proper end
Whereto their means and strict endeavours tend,
Else there would be nought but perplexity
In human life, and all uncertainty."

What inference, then, may we suppose them drawing, but that they, too, who hitherto, perhaps, have known no end to wild desire, have been led astray by wandering fancy, instead of seeking to mingle their aspirations, as they feel now they ought to have done, with those of the departed good and great, making the achievement of immortality, and the realization of fancy's own sweetest dreams the inspiring purpose of their lives—that nothing finite satisfies a boundless mind; that not in this or in that earthly object should their primary affections rest; and that one bourne is the only centre to which the line of love is drawn. Do what we will,—immerse ourselves in matter and in the present with ever such intensity of purpose,—the past, the distant, or the future is still the fairest. Oh, the ideal, the ideal! it is this which wounds, which lacerates the heart. Place the youth by the side of his charmer; let her smile upon him with all the fascination of her sweetest loveliness, talk with him in her wisest, most endearing accents; weep with him in her wildest simplicity of pleading love; he has not attained yet to the full conception of beauty, innocence, woe. Would you have him arrive at this perfect knowledge of what most sways our destiny? Tear him from her; place a barrier of distance between them. Then he will have before his mind's eye that which endeared her to him—the beautiful, which alone, though scantily imparted, renders her what she is; then will he hear in memory words that burn; then will he see sparkle drops that pierce his very soul! The reason simply is, that it is the ideal which now enchants him, for it is a true enchantment that he

suffers. So he sits solitary, and gazes upon the pale blue with fleecy clouds, or the rich golden hues that beautify the horizon towards the city where another dwells, and feels what no tongue can express, no bosom endure with consciousness of aught else but the power of that imaginary perfection which certainly exists somewhere. The images of death, therefore, of that hand which knocks off the fetters that prevent us from flying away to this good, and annihilates the space that separates us from its adorable perfection teach us, as we return from them, to love and seek the path that leads to a realization of the ideal, which is only another word for the felicity of heaven.

It was after visiting the tombs, and spending some time among them, that Rasselas felt warned to remember, too, the shortness of our present state of shadows, the folly of being too long in the choice of life depending on them. It was then that the princess said, "To me the choice of life is become less important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity." So it may be with our young wanderers. Such may be the lesson for after life, as the consequence of that deep stirring of the soul which theirs has just undergone. Yes, beyond a doubt, a fair and honourable life under the old Catholic banner, realizing the celebrated maxim of ΓΝΩΣΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ, and working out the problem of our eloquent contemporary, that it is possible to make the best of both worlds, has sometimes been the consequence of a casual visit to the tombs.

Reader, here expect no epilogue, though, in putting an end to these scenes the stranger would acknowledge that, while risking the favour of some who can easily raise a cry against him, he has been drawn on to venture on many topics which were no doubt altogether beyond his province. Nevertheless, he hopes for indulgence from all but from men of extreme views, and that, too, simply on the ground of general custom, which now permits all subjects to be glanced at by every one; from which practice undoubtedly, whatever some may say, there are advantages to counterbalance the evil, since ancient themes are thereby considered under different aspects, adapted to dispositions or times; new illustrations are supplied, in accordance with fresh events, and certain considerations of importance rendered more familiar to persons of the common class, from being expressed in a way less scholastic than popular. True, as one of our old dramatists says, "The inquiring after good does not belong unto every man," and least of all to such as the writer of these pages; but though we must not always talk in the marketplace of what happens to us in the forest, one may observe that the testimony which seems extorted from persons who have more reason to be silent than to speak, may sometimes possess

greater weight than that of others, the tenor of whose lives identifies them with the cause which they support. Neither do such proflers of service suppose hypocrisy in those who make them; for, as Hazlitt observes, "he is a hypocrite who professes what he does not believe; not he who does not practise all he wishes or approves. There is no inconsistency or hypocrisy in a man who has many failings thinking himself a Christian." Besides, after all, perhaps there is a certain claim to grace when some one is heard addressing Catholicity, to account for his doing so, in the words of Bellavio, and instead, like others, of turning against their benefactress, saying to the Church,

"You did take me up when I was nothing,
And only yet am something, by being yours."

In finishing, he would have pardon, too, not from the living only, but from the dead; from our ancient poets, Shirley, Ford, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and all who survive in Dodsley, Hawkins, and their followers, whose words have been so often pilfered without acknowledging the theft, while appareling his own sense with them. Upon this tissue of his composition he would also ask for judgment when the whole together had been seen successively, and not after its parts have been taken asunder; and, moreover, when particular sentences from ancient books that might seem too absolute had been interpreted under the softening influence of the general tone, and not taken for more than they mean; since in all such compositions words and examples are often used figuratively, or like patches of raw, salient colours, by a painter; and when the ignorant would say that neither such red or black, taken apart, and viewed closely, can represent any thing in nature, those who can appreciate such attempts remind them that they are only useful as producing a general impression when beheld from a distance, blended together, and reduced to harmony also by other and neutral tints, in accordance with the unobtrusive continuous colouring of the whole. Generally, therefore, matter would not be wanting for an apologetical epilogue; yet, like other forësters, it is better to finish without more tedious leave-taking, and say only, in conclusion, that

"Our task is done,
Our spoil is won."

Were he ever so inclined to collect here his scattered thoughts it would be difficult to express them; for,

"As one from a dream awaken'd, straight
All he hath seen forgets; yet still retains

Impression of the feeling in his dream,
E'en such is he *."

It is enough to express a hope that the object originally announced in setting out has been to a certain degree fulfilled. It has been shown, that from first to last, for those who have crossed all the high-ways of this forest of life, searched all the woods, beat up and down, as if in order to find obstacles, with as much pain and diligence as ever huntsman did for a lost deer, there are brakes and openings to the centre in abundance; that, however mysterious and beset with difficulties may be human life, none of its roads can be said to resemble those of the American forest, "which, though broad at first, finally dwindle to a squirrel-track, and run up a tree." Some wanderers whom we have met, it is true, seemed of the squirrel order, and one only loses one's breath trying to follow them. But the windings of others can be traced, and the cause of all their deviations understood; for many have been seen to involve themselves in obscurities from having intelligible motives of one sort or other inducing them to do so; others seemed to get wrong without a motive, and only from having had that within them which cannot be explained; that "I know not what," as De Retz said of Rochefoucauld, which keeps them from pursuing straight and noble roads, to take cross by-paths, full of thorns and precipices; but we have seen that at times most persons are presented with opportunities for discerning the beauty that radiates from the centre. We ran all their mazes with them, being often ourselves, perhaps, animated with the same feeling; we followed or joined in their windings out and subtle turnings; watched their snaky ways, making them frequently our own, through brakes and thickets, into woods of darkness, where they were fain to creep upon their breasts in paths never trod by men, but wolves and foxes; but still we came along with them, to our own surprise, perhaps, as well as theirs, sooner or later, to the way out and to the avenue. On this last of all our excursions we have arrived at the same results. We have found issues to the joy of peace and union in the bosom of Catholicity, for the dying; issues for those who mark their end; issues for those who follow them to the grave; issues to those who visit their tombs, since who can behold new and sudden things nor cast his mental slough?

Through all these brakes and avenues, moreover, it was clear that there reigned a central attraction inexplicable if we did not admit that it came from the great Sovereign of hearts, whose monarchy, uncircumscribed, extends to the whole human race; whose sceptre is not like that of common kings, but a bright

golden shaft, which, efficacious with some, resistible partially by others, finds access, with more or less of effect, either secretly or visibly, to all mankind, and, like subtle lightning, penetrates to the most secure and stubborn cell that ever yet enclosed a human thought. One of the great poets of the Elizabethan age has said, that to reconcile humours is a bold undertaking, and far greater than the reconciliation of churches; the quarrel between humours having been much the ancients, and, in his poor opinion, the root of all schism and faction. We have seen, however, that nothing short of this reconciliation is proposed and effected by Catholicism, which adapts itself to all capacities as to all directions of genius, and which, in point of fact, is found to accomplish the great object of uniting in an immense bond of peace and fellowship, in a common faith, hope, and charity, all the families of mind, and all the differences of heart and sentiment, which exist in every age and rank and circumstance of human life. No doubt on every one of the roads that we have followed, many estimable persons have still thought to find the centre in some separated association which avowedly had a human origin; esteeming it supreme in moral and religious proof of its titles to the homage of mankind; but time is doing justice, we are told by themselves, to such pretensions; and it is they who remark that in our age it seems hardly possible to repeat such mistakes much longer. "All separate communities," says a popular writer, with whose words only we are concerned, "are breaking up; and this is a good thing, if it lead them at last to a universal union of heads and hearts. The degeneration of sects is the natural forerunner of the restitution of all things. We have no desire to see one sect either better or worse than their neighbours. Our great desire is to see a spirit of universal conviction that all sectarianism has been a failure. for this conviction will promote the growth of an earnest desire for universal reconciliation." *Fiat, fiat!*

We have, then, as probably some persons at least will concede, ascertained the truth of the proposition with which we set out; having seen that there are vistas through the forest of human life, not like those Egyptian avenues of solemn sphinxes reposing in mysterious beauty, but openings lined by intelligible indexes, pointing, without ambiguity, to the centre, which some wanderers pass by inadvertently, and which many refuse to take, while others follow them to the central truth. We seem to have proved that there are openings to it wide or narrow, according as circumstances may conspire to favour or oppose a passage, but seldom impenetrable for any of human kind, wandering in this great labyrinthian wood of poor mortality, from east to west, or from childhood to the grave.

So all these journeys end; and, accordingly, as we are at the

- point of convergence on terminating this ultimate road, like every other, at the central truth,

"Look, visitors of tombs, O look!
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook;
This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend!
Here our solemn search hath end!"

THE END.

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